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#46

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April/May 1978
Number 46

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REVERB

Of Human (and Editorial?) Error...

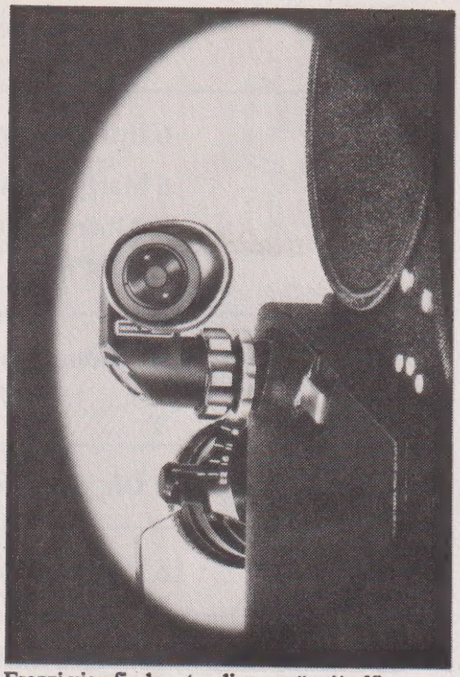
It would be an excellent idea if **Cinema Canada** were to adopt the practise used universally by newspapers and edit its published letters for **glaring factual errors.** Squinting at this page through the egg crusted thickly on my face, I speak for that sadly misbegotten breed of which I am obviously a member, the loud-mouthed ignorant. My letter, printed in **Cinema Canada** no. 45, attacking C.F.I. and at the same time (I shudder to think of it) confusing it with the Canadian Film Institute, while in most other respects remaining a competent confutation, was reduced by the inclusion of the error to the febrile ravings of a well-meaning fool (which perhaps it was, in which case you, as editors, out of human compassion for this misguided soul, ought to have disregarded the letter entirely). I know I am not the first to commit such a blunder, and I doubt I will be the last; by making the necessary editorial corrections and restoring these faulty letters to their intended level of force and accuracy, **Cinema Canada** will spare its writers needless humiliation and improve the quality of the magazine by making it at least **appear** as though intelligent comment is being submitted by its readers. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'll just go and wipe this foam from my mouth....

Paul Vitols

Right Side Up

We heard from Ronan, Howard and Associates Inc. the p.r. people responsible for the Frezzolini-account, who thanked us for the Equipment News item in the last issue. The letter went on:

"However, the photo you reproduced lying on its side could, if they feel humorous, make camera operators laugh for hours. Though I'm sure we all need a few laughs, anyway, could you print some kind of correction in another issue



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soon. It really isn't good for cameramen/women/operators/filmmakers to get the idea my client doesn't know what it is doing. Frezzolini is really a top-grade professional camera manufacturer with long experience. They produce a top-grade camera."

We don't doubt it for a minute, and take full responsibility for the laughs. It's a topsy-turvy business anyway. Ed.

Héroux Responds

Cinema Canada received a copy of the following letter, addressed to Mme. Françoise Berd.

Dear Mrs. Berd;

I read your interview published in the March 1978 issue of Cinema Canada with great interest, and I'm forced to state that despite a long career, you don't seem to understand the different titles and their corresponding functions that are inherent in the structure of making a feature film.

As an example, regarding the feature film "Angela", I would like to point out that the functions of Zev Braun and myself were those of executive producer and producer, respectively.

Contrary to what you imply, I was working as producer of this film on a permanent, active basis during the entire shooting schedule. It's unfortunate your statement was made without your having checked all the facts. May I suggest that you refer to the law books for the exact definition of what constitutes a Canadian film.

Regarding my film experience as a producer and as an executive producer, I will be most happy, upon request, to forward to you a resumé of my activities. I hope the said resumé will convince you that I am quite qualified to perform the functions I do.

Claude Héroux

For the Record

I was interested to read John Hofsess' complaint (Cinema Canada no. 45) that he didn't see any letters in The Globe and Mail about Urjo Kareda's review of Martin Knelman's recent book.

Just for the record, there was, in fact, such a letter in the Globe of December 15, 1977, in which John Herbert wrote that Kareda is literary manager at the Stratford Festival and that Martin Knelman, whose book he reviewed in the Globe on December 10, is a drama critic for Saturday Night Magazine and reports on Stratford.

In his letter Herbert remarked that the review was a case of "you scratch me and I'll scratch you" and added that "It is frightening to me that anyone, however good-willed, could actually take this flimsy little book seriously."

Jaan Pill
Toronto, Ontario

OMISSION

The photos on "I Miss You, Hugs and Kisses" in the last issue of Cinema Canada were taken by Shin Sugino. We regret that we failed to give him credit. Ed.

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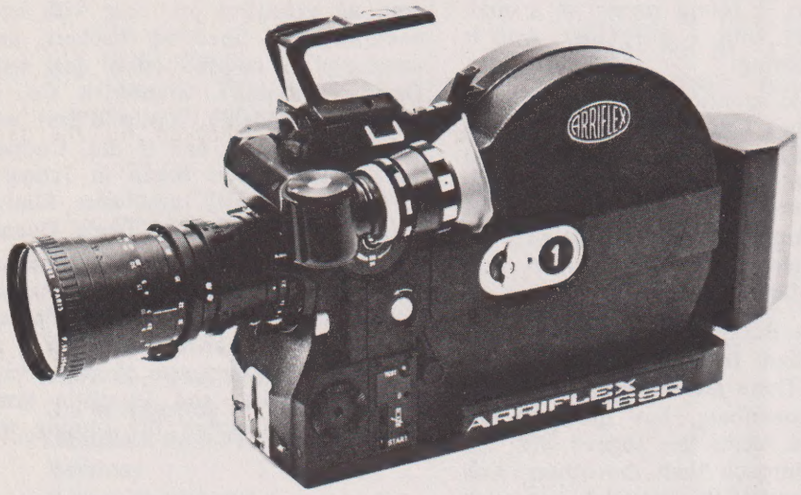

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The deadline for applications is May 31 1978, or when the position(s) have been filled. All letters of application must be accompanied by a complete curriculum vitae and the names of three persons who would be prepared to serve as references.

Please address all inquiries and/or applications to: –

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INTRODUCING...

martyn burke

a storyteller

Martyn Burke

I met Martyn Burke in a small dark room adjacent to his editing room. How **à propos**. We were going to talk about his film on conspiracy and power, **Coup d'Etat**. The atmosphere was appropriately conspiratorial. My goal, an interview for **Cinema Canada**; his, publicity for his biggest gamble to date, a more-than-million-dollar feature.

I'd never seen any of Burke's work at that point. I wondered whether he would be an introverted nationalist, or a sensationalistic amateur with a talent for a racy theme (I knew he had made **Connections**, the Mafia exposé documentary, for the CBC). I found neither, and was pleased.

Martyn Burke is that interesting mixture of ego and curiosity that produces storytellers. I found myself in a small dark room with a storyteller. And it was stimulating.

I should mention that I have since seen Burke's CBC documentary **Carnivals**. Speaking of powerful stories and undershown films! He has also made the documentaries **California Movie**, and **Idi-Amin: A Portrait** (shown on 60 minutes, CBS), and the feature film, **The Clown Murders.**)

Martyn Burke is that strange beast in Canadian feature films, a writer-director. There are others, Gilles Carle, David Cronenberg, but Burke is different. He seems less aligned with the auteur approach than the others. And he comes out of the television documentary. And he would like to go on making documentaries periodically. A contradiction. There is a rumor that Canadians make terrible screenwriters: too hung up in the documentary tradition. Maybe in the year of **Outrageous**, this rumor too, about Canadian film and filmmakers, will be laid to rest.

The story of the making of **Coup d'Etat** is itself a great story. I hope the movie lives up to it. The idea of filming a real coup has been with Burke since 1968 when he was caught in the middle of a real live takeover in Peru. Since then he's been reading, writing, studying. He's had lots of material. Dozens of governments have come and gone, particularly in the Third World. He also acquired the rights to Edward Luttwack's book, **Coup d'Etat**, the acknowledged "how to" book on coups.

In 1973, it looked like **Coup d'Etat** was going to be a feature, co-sponsored by CBC and Quadrant Films. Burke even shot ten reels of coup scenes in Germany using the Canadian Army to storm the national palace (Bavarian town and palaces were the background). Then the project came to a halt. And it wasn't until 1976 that Burke, along with producer Chris Dalton, recovered the rights to **Coup d'Etat**. I didn't press Burke on the bloodletting that led to the halt of the production.

With the footage that he already had, he prepared a short promo for potential investors. Enter Robert Cooper, better known to Canadians as the CBC's Ombudsman. Cooper wanted into the movies; Burke needed help, ergo an executive producer with connections who lined up backers, and developed a co-production deal with David Hemming's Greenwich Co. in England. Suddenly, **Coup d'Etat** was going to happen, and it did. Cooper, Burke and Dalton began in January, 1977. By August, they were filming with Hemmings, Peter O'Toole, Donald Pleasance and Barry Morse, Canadians Jon Granik, George Tonliatos, August Schellenberg, Eli Rill, Chuck Shamata and others became conspirators in an unnamed Mediterranean country, ripe with corruption and idealistic army officers. By October the filming was done.

Burke and his co-conspirators have done everything to provide us with a high-powered thriller. International stars, a fine cameraman, Ousama Rawi (**Pulp, Black Windmill**), a special effects expert from England, Roy Whybrow (**Exodus, Battle of Britain**), a Los Angeles story editor to help beat Burke's script into shape, and ICM of Los Angeles, New York, London and Rome to market the picture. All the right moves.

They have to be, according to Burke. He's sticking his neck out in the international film marketplace, and he wants to make sure he can compete in that market. He's not afraid to compete, and he suggests the rest of us adopt the same attitude. Get tough. Be more disciplined. Don't accept second best. Work with the best people (ACTRA will be insulted by that one). Producers shouldn't accept a script that isn't fully developed and ready to make its mark (the implication is that they, too, readily proceed with half-baked scripts), and writers should go for people over topics if we are to have first calibre screenplays. Again, **Outrageous** comes up in the conversation. Canadians should fight their natural tendency to form committees; they could ruin beautiful opportunities for Canada to make its mark as a centre for international filmmaking (CBC, CFDC and ACTRA should be insulted by that one). And most of all, stop the didactic filmmaking. If you want a lecture, go to school. If you want to make Canadians better people, send them to church.

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After all the slammers, Burke concluded that he is actually very optimistic. As he puts it, we are now in phase II of the feature film industry in Canada. In phase I, you were a miracle worker if you could make a feature film in Canada. In Phase II, you had to pretend Canada didn't exist. Every film had to be commercial. What used to be called the 'passion pit film' was our penchant. And now we're in phase III, after **Duddy Kravitz** and **Lies My Father Told Me**, we have proved we can make successful commercial films in Canada. We don't even mind if the world knows they are set in Canada.

I asked Martyn Burke to fantasize for a moment about ten years from now. Where would he like to be. He looked away and closed his eyes. And then he answered, "Right here. In Toronto. In the middle of a thriving film industry."

Coup d'Etat is a film written and directed by Martyn Burke. I look forward to seeing it.

Kenneth Dancyger

photo: Lois Seigel

Albert Kish

albert kish

the son of mrs. kish

Albert Kish is a Hungarian filmmaker who, if you put a motorcycle helmet on him, looks like a cross between the poet Solzhenitsyn and a Russian astronaut.

He recently won seven international awards for his film **Los Canadienses**, a thoroughly researched study of Canadian participation in the Spanish Civil War.

Albert makes personalized films about events and situations he considers important. **This is a Photograph** portrays immigrants as striving and vital people in a developing Canada.

Albert does not laugh at the immigrants but shows their clumsiness during their first five years of assimilation. The immigrants are forced to learn a new language and culture, but Albert does not find their lives tragic; instead, he calls their attitude a type of "gallows humor".

Albert reminisces, "On my first date with an English girl here in Canada I bought dog biscuits as a present because I couldn't read the labels." He reveals the humorous human predicaments which befall us all: One immigrant becomes homesick one night and calls his parents in Greece. "It's easy to pick up the phone in America." His phone bill is $200. The next day he disappears.

A new film, **Hold the Ketchup**, considers the food people eat and focuses on Canadians who were born in other countries but who have retained certain culinary traditions.

The film avoids official commentary and instead concentrates on people making preparations which look simple so that the viewer might try the same recipes.

Albert, who was born in Eger, Hungary in 1937, first became interested in film when a movie company came to his home town. "They brought cranes, dollies, lights, actors," Albert explains. He was 15 and forgot to go to school. Albert watched the filming. "It was magic." The third day his mother came, the fourth day his teacher came, the fifth day the principal... they found Albert still watching.

Then the policeman came... but Albert didn't care. And the cameraman noticed him and let him look in the camera. And he's been hooked on film ever since.

After high school Albert attended the Academy of Stage and Film in Budapest, the one founded by Béla Belazs. Then the revolution broke out in 1956, and he came to Canada. Albert apprenticed as a camera assistant and then freelanced as a cameraman shooting industrial shorts.

In 1964 the CBC had an opening for a film editor. Albert told the supervisor "I can edit." He became an editor. "That was my film schoool. I learned to think very quickly because I worked under enormous pressure. They teach you discipline. I learned editing by watching rushes and tried to connect everything. As a result I became very sensitive to the smallest detail."

During the Expo year the Canadian National Railroad film unit hired Albert. He photographed trains left to right, right to left, low angle/high angle, high angle/low angle. After this enlightening experience John Howe chanced to call the National Film Board. "What are you up to," he curiously inquired. "I'll take it." leaped Albert. Within one half of an hour Albert was an NFB film editor. And the son of Mrs. Kish has been with the film board ever since.

Lois Seigel

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SPARTREE	Best Non-Feature Sound Re-Recording	Barry Jones
SPARTREE	Best Sound Editing	Raymond Hall
SPARTREE	Best Non-Feature Cinamatography	Tim Sale
		Ron Orieux, Dave Geddes & Jeff Mart
GREENPEACE: VOYAGES TO SAVE THE WHALES	Best Non-Feature Sound Recording	Fred Easton
GREENPEACE: VOYAGES TO SAVE THE WHALES	Best Documentary Under 60 minutes	Michael Chechik
SKIPTRACER	Most Promising Director	Zale Dalen

Noel Ross **photo: Lois Seigel**

noel ross
wearing two hats

Noel Ross might be considered to be in a unique position because he has seriously pursued two complementary careers in his lifetime: acting and music.

Born in Southsea, England, Noel relates his first memories: "My mother, I think, was responsible for my acting because she was a rather unhappy woman who sought solace in the cinema, and from the age of two I was taken there three or four times a week where I would sit on her lap to watch the big screen, not understanding anything, although perhaps I understood a lot more than I or anyone else would have realized. I think that we often underestimate how impressed babies are by the images surrounding them. Babies know a lot more than we give them credit for. I watched people acting – and then came home to re-enact what I saw on the screen. I would go in front of a full-length mirror and pull faces at myself and watch the changing of my expression."

In later years during school theatre productions, Noel often landed the part of a girl because of his fair skin and blond hair, and he recalls these as being very demanding roles.

His music studies began at an early age. He played piano and violin, and at 18 took a scholarship to the Royal College of Music in London where he studied the trumpet and conducting.

Later Noel entered The Guildhall School, where he completed his simultaneous studies in music and drama.

He was invited to become a private pupil of the famous conductor Anatole Fistoulari and also played the trumpet with The London Philharmonic Orchestra for several years.

At 28 Noel conducted his first professional orchestra for London's Festival Ballet Company.

"When you are studying to be a conductor, you are learning scores, becoming familiar with the repertoire, and practicing with your teacher. You practice the technique of conducting. The teacher says 'You're not clear. Your arms are moving in the wrong way.' You are conducting in a naked room – pointing to an armchair in the corner as if it were a timpani. Other musicians can go out and buy their instruments, practice them and learn to play them. The conductor's instrument is an orchestra. You just can't go out and buy orchestras.... although one man did – Sir Thomas Beecham."

The years which followed provided opportunities for the actor and musician and included work as a narrator where an intimacy with both arts was a great advantage. Noel's varied employments included reading for musical performances such as Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf"; advising and managing a music publishing company and conducting for pop and light musical recordings.

One year ago Noel came to live in Canada. His credits here list **Sarah** for the CBC (the story of Sarah Bernhardt); Eric Till's "The Newcomers"; numerous radio plays and, as he puts it "a lot of lovely dubbing", including **Duplessis, Quebec and After....** But his musical career has not been ignored. He now conducts The Island City Singers who will be performing at McGill's Pollack Hall in May.

Noel finds the acting profession in Canada to be very healthy and the standards of performance to be extremely high. Perhaps because he has followed two careers: music and drama, he has been able to maintain a sense of security.

"I have never been unemployed for more than two or three months a year. To function best, I have to be emotionally secure. That's always meant being occupied. I often think of famous film stars who make a film every 5 years and wonder how the time between is spent. I dread having nothing to do."

About acting: I like to be put into the hands of a director who can mold my work. Since film is frequently shot out of a particular time context, an actor must have the flexibility to quickly reproduce whatever mood is required. In theatre you start with the first line and build a performance, but film acting must be spontaneous. I love theatre, but I recognize that my particular talent is at its best when directed in short spurts, as in film.

About music: I feel a knowledge of the performance of music is tremendously helpful in appreciating the performance of words and the reverse is equally true. Our specialized professions tend to segregate people. This narrow concept is rubbish and wasn't true of The Renaissance Man.

Lois Seigel

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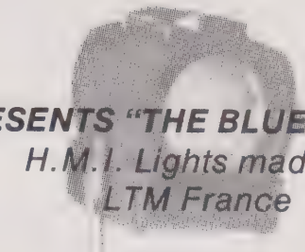

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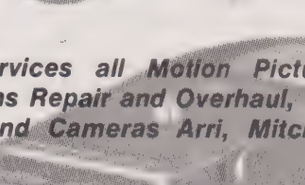

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PRODUCTION GUIDE

October 16, 1977 to May 1, 1978

by Michèle Caron and Del Mehes

Previous Production Guides have been published in Cinema Canada in issues 24, 33, 37 and in Trade News North no. 1. Together the guides cover feature productions from 1975 to the present.

Code to information

The title of the film is followed by the dates and the location of the shoot. An asterisk after the title indicates financial participation by the Canadian Film Development Corporation. The next line includes the type of film employed, and the language of the original version p.c. production company, p. producer, d. director, sc. scenarist, ph. director of photography, ed. editor, l.p. leading players; status is the stage of production; wt indicates a working title. Films forgotten in an earlier period may also be included.

Avoir 16 ans

1977 (Dec. 27) – 1978 (Jan 20); Montreal 35mm color in French
p.c. Cinak Ltée
p. Marguerite Duparc
d. Jean-Pierre Lefebvre
sc. Claude Paquette, Jean-Pierre Lefebvre
ph. Guy Dufaux
ed. Marguerite Duparc
l.p. Michèle Magny, Gilles Renaud, Patrick Peuvion, Yves Benoit, Marthe Choquette, Louise Choquette.
Status: Editing

Blackout

1977 (Nov. 15 – Dec 20); New York, Montreal 35mm color in English
p.c. Blackout Prod. Ltd.
exec. p. André Link, Ivan Reitman, John Vidette
p. Nicole Boisvert
d. Eddie Matalon
sc. John C.W. Saxton
ph. Jean-Jacques Tarbes
ed. Debbie Karen
l.p. Jim Mitchum, Belinda J. Montgomery, Robert Carradine, June Allyson, Jean-Pierre Aumont, Ray Milland, Don Granbery, Terry Haig, Victor B. Tyler
Status: Complete

A Blackout crazy (Don Granberry)

A Fast Company shoot-out

D'abord ménagère

1977 (Nov. 27 – Dec. 27); Montreal, St. Anselm de Dorchester, St. Bruno, Drummondville (Quebec) 16mm color in French
p.c. Les Reines du Foyer Inc.
exec. p. Gilles Lenoir
p. Luce Guilbeault
d. Luce Guilbeault
ph. Serge Giguère
ed. Babalou Hamelin
Status: Editing
Note: Documentary on housewives

Un éclair au chocolat

1978 (Apr. 18 –); Montréal, Rivière du Loup, Quebec 35mm color in French
p.c. Les Productions Mutuelles Ltée.
exec. p. Pierre David
p. Robert Ménard
d. Jean-Claude Lord
sc. Jean Salvy, Jean-Claude Lord
ph. François Protat
ed. Marcel Poitier
l.p. Lise Thouin, Jean-Louis Roux, Jean Gascon, Aubert Pallascio
status: Shoot

Fast Company

1978 (Feb. 12 – Mar. 7); Toronto 16mm color in English
p.c. Faster Film Production
p. Paul Eichgrun, Peter Wronski, Steve Klys
d. Peter Wronski
sc. Paul Eichgrun
ph. Joseph Sutherland
ed. Bob Schreoder
m. Rolph Kempf
l.p. Rolph Kempf, Clay Borris, Leisha Wagner, Sandra Scoville, Wayne St. John
status: Fine cut

Le grand remue-ménage

1977 (Aug. 17 – Oct. 20); Montreal 16mm color in French
p.c. Les Productions de l'Envol
d. Sylvie Groulx, Francine Allaire
ph. Bruno Carrière, Serge Giguère
ed. Jean Saulnier, Jean Gagné
m. Conventum
status: Complete
note: A documentary which examines the steoreotyped male and female roles.

Highballin'

1977 (Nov. 21 – Dec. 30); Toronto 35mm color in English
p.c. Jon Slan Productions Inc.
exec. p. Stanley Chase, William Hayward
p. Jon Slan
d. Peter Carter
sc. Paul
ph. René Verzier
ed. Eric Wrate
l.p. Peter Fonda, Jerry Reed, Helen Shaver, David Ferry, Chris Wiggins, Mary Pirie, Wendy Thatcher, Christopher Langevin
status: Complete

L'hiver bleu

1977 (Jan. 30 – Mar. 4); Rouyn, Quebec 16mm color in French
p.c. Cinak Ltée.
exec. p. Marguerite Duparc Lefebvre
d. André Blanchard
sc. André Blanchard, Jeanne-Mance Delisle
ph. Alain Dupras
ed. Francis Van Den Heuvel
status: Editing
note: Fiction/documentary about young people in Rouyn who are discovering the world about them and deciding whether or not they wish to commit themselves to society.

I, Maureen

1977 (Sept. 27 – Dec. 20); Toronto 35mm color in English
p.c. I, Maureen Productions
exec. p. Duane Howard
p. Duane Howard
d. Janine Manatis
sc. Janine Manatis
ph. Marc Champion
ed. Kirk Jones
l.p. Coleen Collins, Mike Ironside, Brian Da Mude
status: Complete

Kavik The Wolf Dog

1978 (Mar. 20 – May 3); Calgary, Toronto, Sault Ste. Marie, Vancouver 35mm color in English
p.c. Jon Slan Productions
exec. p. Stanley Chase, Patricia Johnston
p. Jon Slan
d. Peter Carter
sc. George Malko
ph. Burt Dunk
ed. Eric Wrate
l.p. Ronny Cox, Linda Sorensen, Andrew MacMillan, Chris Wiggins, Guest Star – John Ireland
Status: Shoot

Kings and Desperate Men

1977 (Dec. 5 – Dec. 28); Montreal 35mm color in English
p.c. Kineversal Productions Inc.
p. Alexis Kanner
d. Alexis Kanner
sc. Edmund Ward, Alexis Kanner
ph. Paul Van Der Linden
ed. Ed Beyer
l.p. Patrick McGoohan, Alexis Kanner, Andrea Marcovicci and Margaret Trudeau
Status: Editing

Mutation

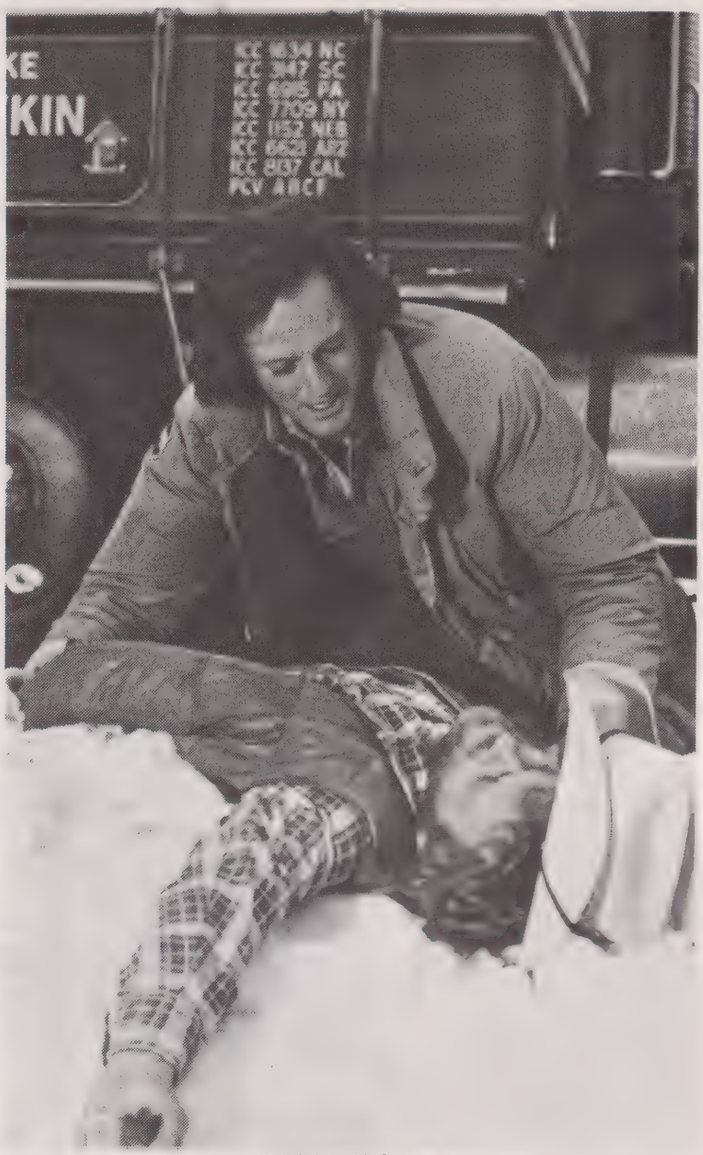
1977 (Nov. 23 – Dec. 17); Toronto 35 mm color in English
p.c. Harmony Productions
p. Ed Hunt, Barry Pearson
d. Ed Hunt
sc. Barry Pearson, Ed Hunt
ph. Mark Irwin
ed. Ron Wisman
m. Eric Robertson
l.p. Kate Reid, Daniel Pilon, Brenda Donohue, Celine Lomez, Michael Reynolds
status: Complete

Riel

(1978 (Mar. 29 –); Toronto. Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Prince Edward County 16mm color in English
p.c. CBC in association with Green River Pictures
exec. p. Stanley Colbert
p. John Trent
d. George Bloomfield
sc. Roy Moore
ph. Vic Sarin
l.p. Paxton Whitehead, Marcel Sabourin, Kenneth Welsh, August Schellenberg, Raymond Clouthier, Leslie Nelson, Roger Blay, Jean-Louis Roux, Claude Jutra, Gary Reineke, Ron Harron
status: Shoot

Les servantes du Bon Dieu (W.T.)

1978 (Mar. 20 – Apr. 8); Sherbrooke, Quebec 16mm color in French
p.c. Les Productions Prisma Inc.
Exec. Prod. Claude Godbout
p. Claude Godbout
d. Diane Letourneau



Peter Fonda and Jerry Reid **Highballin'** along

ph. Jean-Charles Tremblay
ed. Josée Lecours
status: Editing
note: Documentary on nuns from an order called Les petites soeurs de la Sainte Famille who work as servants and do such chores as cooking and housekeeping.

They're Drying Up The Streets

1977 (Oct. 11 – Oct. 27); Toronto, Vancouver 16mm color in English
p.c. CBC
exec. p. Ralph L. Thomas
d. Robin Spry
sc. Cam Hubert
ph. Ken Gregg
ed. Myrtle Virgo
l.p. Don Francks, Sarah Torgov, Len Cariou, August Schellenberg, Kelvin Butler, Jane Eastwood, Frank Moore, Warren Davis, John Peter Linton, Laurie J. Brown
status: Fine cut

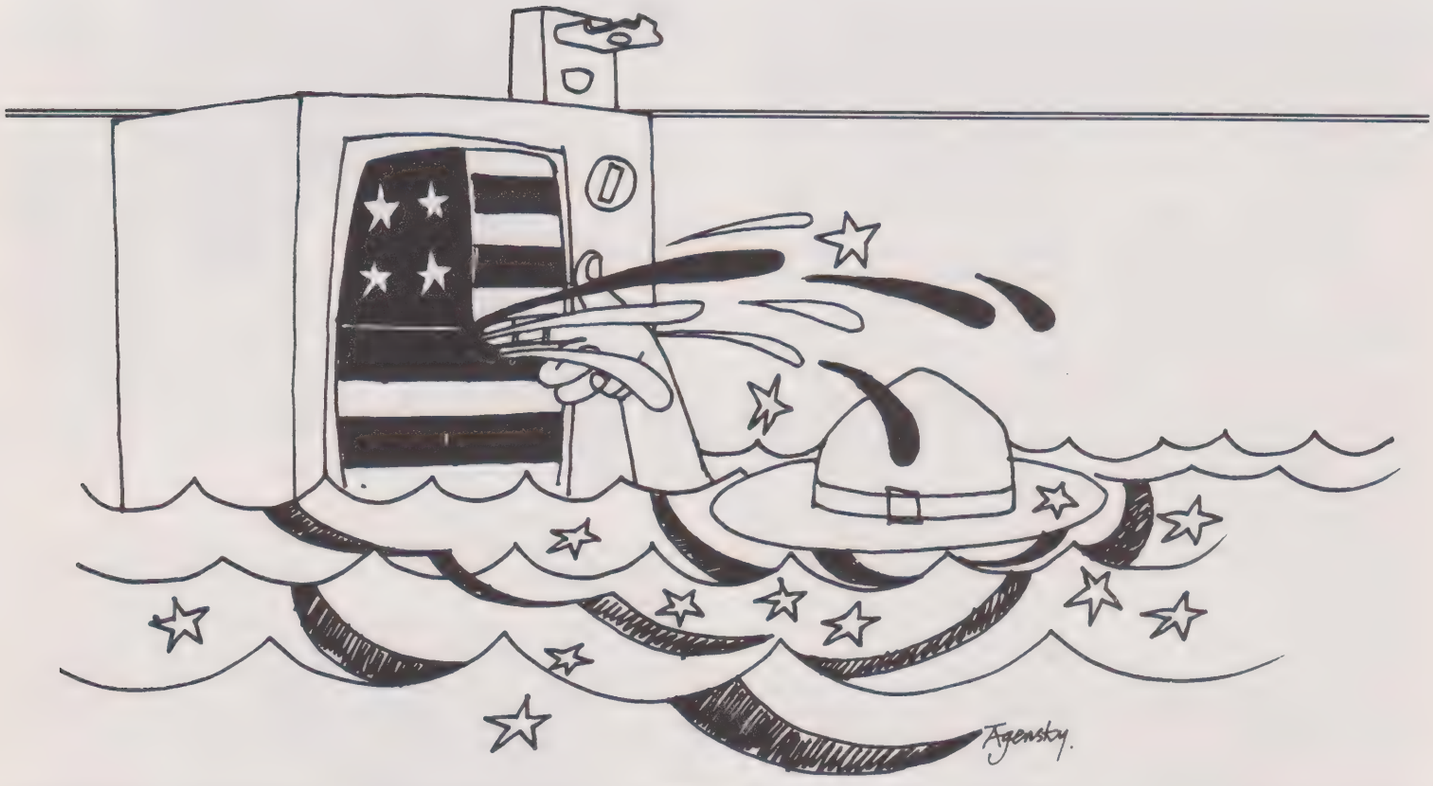
Tyler

1977 (Aug. 1 – Aug. 31); Toronto 16mm color in English
p.c. CBC
exec. p. Ralph L. Thomas
p. David Pears
d. Ralph L. Thomas
sc. Roy MacGregor
ph. Vic Sarin
ed. Ron Wisman
m. Eric Robertson
l.p. R.H. Thompson, Murray Westgate, Sean McCann, Kay Hawtrey, Robert McClure, Sonja Smits, Dennis Hayes
status: Mixing

oh, say! can you see?

Cox is warming to the subject after all these years of researching and writing about the problems of Canadian film and broadcasting. The article which follows comes from his notes to the Task Force on Canadian Unity. It outlines the political dimension of the cultural problems we live with and is just too good not to print.

by Kirwan Cox



On February 14, 1977, the CBC National News reported that an isolated community in northern Minnesota had protested to their government because they could only receive CBC-TV from Winnipeg. Without the benefit of American television, their children were acquiring strange attitudes and even preferred rooting for the Blue Bombers instead of the Vikings. No expense was spared to erect the necessary transmitters to bring a few hundred people their American channels.

Kirwan Cox is the chairperson of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers, and producer of the films Dreamland I and II.

While the United States vigorously protects its cultural and mythic territory, Canada has spared no expense to undermine its own cultural foundations. We live in a country which imports its culture wholesale, and in the process we have destroyed most of the elements that build a nation. Our children belong to a television country which knows no borders and is inhabited by the six million dollar man and Kojak who overpower the King of Kensington by size of their budgets and the quantity of their air time.

The danger to Canada does not come from nationalism in Quebec, but from the lack of nationalism in Ottawa, among other places. The question before you is not "What is wrong with Quebec?". It is rather, "What is wrong with the rest of

us?". The issue is whether English-Canada can separate from the United States before Quebec separates from Canada. Quebec separation resembles a desperate manning of the lifeboats as the English-Canadian Titanic sinks quietly, even willingly, into the American ocean.

The evidence of that sinking is all around us. In Toronto, with more American television available on cable than any American city, Canadians spend 80 percent of their television viewing hours watching American programs. That figure rises to 90 percent when there is no hockey. Overall, Canada is the largest foreign market for American television programs in the world. In our movie theatres, 96 percent of screen time is held by foreign films and Canada remains the largest foreign market for Hollywood despite our small population. Over 90 percent of the paperback and record markets are also held by foreign products. We ship hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars out of the country to pay for our own denationalization.

For one reason or another, Canadians have been pushed, or pushed themselves, out of their own country. Nearly every report from the Aird Commission in 1929 on down to today have decried the Americanization of Canada. This process has been abetted by governments too fearful to interfere with American control of our cultural markets, and businessmen who see greater profits and fewer risks acting as branch plant agents for foreign companies instead of taking their own initiative.

As Senator Keith Davey wrote in his 1970 Report on the mass media:

> "This country should no longer tolerate a situation where the public interest in so vital a field as information is dependent on the greed or goodwill of an extremely privileged group of businessmen."

John Grierson, founder of the documentary film movement and the National Film Board of Canada, said in 1969:

> "You have got to husband your resources and really use them creatively. You cannot run them on a laissez-faire basis.... You cannot afford it. The laissez-faire of information will merely feed you into the belly of the United States in no time at all."

Despite these warnings, and the creation of public enterprise cultural institutions like the CBC, NFB, CFDC, and Canada Council which were established to counter the failure of Canadian private enterprise in these fields, we have allowed our cultural markets to fall completely into the hands of foreign producers with disastrous results. We support Canadian production with public enterprises funded by tax dollars and we leave the marketplace to American producers on a laissez-faire basis. The creation of cultural products in Canada is thus less of a problem than their distribution.

We create ever-proliferating lines of communication running north and south and wonder why our lines of identity to run east and west. We allow our subconscious American culture to dominate our shelves and channels and wonder why our indigenous culture is self-concious and often immature. We export our talent along with our pulp and paper, and we wonder where our world-class artists are. We reward the colonial mentality and punish the nationalist mentality, and we wonder where our nation went.

While the policies of Canada's leaders remain colonial in their outlook, as usual, there is evidence that the country is changing, becoming more nationalistic in its cultural concerns, and moving away from the Government. According to the Gallup Polls, the percentage of Canadians who believe the Canadian way of life is being influenced too much by the U.S. grew from 27 percent in 1956 to 57 percent in 1974. The percentage who believe the Canadian way of life is being too influenced by American television grew from 49 percent in 1970 to 59 percent in 1975. Even if buying back control of the Canadian economy meant a "big reduction in our standard of livng", the percentage of Canadians in favor increased from 46 percent in 1970 to 58 percent in 1975.

Yet, in the present crisis, the Canadian Government insists on denying the equations between nationalism and national unity and copes with the issue of Canada's colonial status, as a cause of our disintegration, by a series of public relations gestures such as FIRA. We have not seen any substantive policies in the cultural industries since the Trudeau Government came to power. We look to the future with fear as we wait for the decisions on film policy and Pay-TV policy.[+]

What is to be done? First, we must legislate primacy to our own cultural products in our own markets. Equally important, we are going to have to alter our priorities in terms of what our cultural development is going to cost us. We believe the best hope for a united Canada is a partnership of equals, each confident in its own identity and survival. Quebec must believe that its long-range future in North America is better served by partnership with English-Canada than it is by independence. Only a confident and assured English-Canada can give such an undertaking.

The cultural problems of English and French-Canada are different because of language, but similar in many other respects. The solution of these problems will be expensive, but that is the cost of keeping the country together and independent. This will involve reversing a lot of our existing priorities and changing many assumptions.

In this regard, we would like to propose what we call the "Policy of Rational National Defence". We would like to give the CBC the defense budget and give the military establishment the CBC budget. We believe this would better reflect the true role these institutions play in defending Canada. The military would defend the north with its patrol planes and the CBC would defend the 49th parallel with high quality programming, national heroes, superstars, myths, symbols, and a vision of our common purpose. If we're not prepared to consider this policy seriously, then we are not prepared to consider ourselves seriously as a nation. Only as an independent nation do we have a common future – not as an American colony. □

[+] Despite recent announcements, we still look to the future with fear on both these policy issues. Since the Government has chosen to again ignore the problem of American control of the marketplace by putting forward a vague voluntary agreement with a one year deadline, we continue to wait for a real film policy.

As for Pay-TV, the Government has not announced its policy yet. The CRTC decision to postpone the introduction of Pay TV, because it would become an American channel contrary to the Broadcasting Act, may be overruled by the Minister of Communications.

The Hollywood companies are the current and potential beneficiaries of Government positions in both cases. When foreign business interests take precedence over the national interest so consistently, we have clearly lost the sovereignty needed to run the country.

A new store-front on the Main. photo: Lois Seigel

cinéma parallèle

craziness paying off

by Lois Seigel

What do you do if you're a distribution co-op which is slowly – or not so slowly – going broke and the arts councils are cutting off your funds and things couldn't look worse? Build yourself a theatre, of course!

The tea room with its view on St. Laurent street.

photo: Lois Seigel

In 1967 Claude Chamberland was a Montreal rock and roll singer in a band called The Opera Sisters.

"What we were doing was very crazy. No studio wanted to record us. But now craziness pays off."

Claude had always been interested in any experimental orientation to any of the arts. Then he heard about some people who were setting up a new approach to cinema: a center for independent films to be directed by Dimitri Eipides. Claude immediately relinquished his "disco" days and became a projectionist.

And there began his immersion into film. Dimitri founded the Coopérative des Cinéastes Indépendants with 15 films and $2,000 of his own money. Its first theatre was called The Underground Film Center, located at de Maisonneuve and St. Marc in Montreal. Here they invited 40 filmmakers from all over the world, including the U.S., Japan, Italy, Spain and France, to show their films. At this time Claude and Dimitri also organized the first foreign tours of Canadian Independent films and accompanied the films to 14 countries.

Lois Siegel writes, photographs, teaches and makes experimental films in Montreal.

But in 1970 the rent doubled, and the Co-op was forced to show films elsewhere: The Museum of Fine Arts, the Museum of Contemporary Art and The Quebec Sculptures Association, now Conventum, provided space. And then The Cinéma Parallèle was born.

In 1976 they moved again – to Galerie Media on Rachel. Claude and Dimitri had always desired a permanent theatre – it was a long dream to accomplish due to money, zoning, construction regulations and health requirements. This year, Claude, with the help of Rainer Schatz, Remi Blackburn, Richard Zurowski and many others, opened The Cinéma Parallèle at 3682 St. Lawrence, on Montreal's "Main".

As the first regular showplace for independent films, The Cinéma Parallèle holds screenings 7 days a week just like a normal theatre. Also, it houses the Café Méliès. The St. Lawrence location is open to theatre, music and poetry; groups or individuals can arrange for screening.

The theatre projector is a 16mm Hortson. It cost $23,000 new. Cinéma Parallèle bought a used one and had it reconditioned. The machine will soon have the possibility of projecting magnetic stripe, or double system: both edge and center track, besides optical sound. The Cinema also intends to buy a super 8 projector capable of rendering 16mm quality.

Claude explains, "The Cinéma Parallèle is a non-profit organization. The Co-op now has 200 members. Some Que-

photo: Lois Seigel

Claude Chamberland who believed enough to make it happen.

bec filmmakers in 1969 wanted only Quebec films in the Co-op. I said 'over my dead body' – we are working on the principle that we must be of help to any independent filmmaker, no matter what country he comes from."

Money has always been one of the major problems in running the Co-op. "From 1974 to 1977 we didn't receive one penny. Only this year did we finally get a grant from L'Institut Québecois du Cinéma and la Direction Générale du Cinéma et de l'Audio-visuel, which is part of the Ministry of Communications of Quebec."

"Federal money was always a problem. The Co-op had financial difficulties because we always received one-fifth of what our budget requested from The Canada Council. But we survived. We always hoped for some flexibility towards our financial situation, but Penni Jaques and Françoyse Picard decided to cut us off completely. We didn't quite understand why they did this. We couldn't provide an audited financial statement because we couldn't afford a bookkeeper and accountant. The money we would have paid those people represented half the money we were getting from The Canada Council, which is ridiculous."

"It was a neurotic situation – after all we'd done, festivals, distribution, promotion, presentations and tours. We were the only group who had permanency in the showing of independent films."

"In July, Françoyse Picard told me that before we could get a grant we had to prove ourselves worthy during the next 6 months. I saw her last week (February 21) and she said, 'It's not 6 months, it's one year.' She knew about the Parallèle. She had received an invitation to the opening. So, I guess we'll let it cool off for the time being."

"We've been working on a new catalogue for a year now – off and on because of money problems."

But what benefits go to the independent filmmaker who shows his work at the Parallèle?

"As opposed to the Cinémathèque Québecoise, which does not pay filmmakers, we give $100 per program. If a filmmaker shows his 30-minute film, he gets $30. The Cinémathèque in Belgium pays filmmakers. Independent filmmakers need money to make films and to live. We are paying, and the Cinémathèque isn't, although they have a bigger budget. They should have more consideration."

"If an independent filmmaker manages to have his films shown as a short before a feature, say with Famous Players, he may only get $110 for a 30-minute film, and the film might be projected 70 times."

It is interesting to note that in the United States a new program has been instituted to show short films by independent filmmakers in commercial movie theatres throughout the nation. Under the auspices of Media Arts, National Endowment for the Arts. "Short Film Showcasing" intends to introduce the public to the development and innovation that has occurred in film.

Warner Bros. and United Artists act as distributors of the under-10-minute films. Each filmmaker receives a $3,000 honorarium for non-exclusive use of his film. The Endowment fund pays for the blow-up from 16 to 35mm.

This year, The Cinéma Parallèle will host the 7th Montreal International Festival of Cinema in 16mm simultaneously with The Museum of Fine Arts, April 26-30.

The first festival was supported entirely by Dimitri, and then the Co-op received money from the Festivals Office, Secretary of State, in Ottawa.

"But it was the office's wish to have a commercial festival to build the film industry – with big receptions like at Cannes. Everyone was looking for glamor and prestige."

Claude and Dimitri's idea was completely the opposite, and not competitive by any means. "We wanted a showplace for independent films not usually projected on the commercial circuit."

When other festivals were introduced, the independents were tossed aside. "You're not industry oriented. We can't provide the money," they were told.

The financial sources for this year's festival are la Direction Générale du Cinéma and The National Film Board. "These people are helping, but we have to make them understand that a festival such as ours is working in an aura of communication – a festival as a living experience."

And the future: "We intend to institute a production Co-op. We will provide equipment and a permanent technician to demonstrate every phase of filmmaking.

Also, we will invite filmmakers from all over the world to the Parallèle. Taktiko Iimura, the Japanese filmmaker, will be here in April.

Claude's new dream: to keep The Cinéma Parallèle open 24 hours a day. □

The theatre. **photo: Lois Seigel**

on hand at f.i.s.t.

Pen Densham and Leonard Yakir were sent to apprentice with Norman Jewison on the shoot of *F.I.S.T.* For Densham, the experience was an important one, and led eventually to the filming of a documentary on Sylvester Stallone. But that's another story, to be told another time. Below, Densham's view of the shooting of *F.I.S.T.* and his role as observant Canadian filmmaker.

by Pen Densham

Norman Jewison and Pen Densham during a break

It was a little like the plot for a Frank Capra movie, "Mr. Densham goes to Hollywood". A character from the sticks, a Canadian filmmaker, is bustled off to the entertainment mecca of the world.

The kindly people from a string of organizations – CCFM, CFDC, NFB, OAC, Canada Council[+]– had collected all those initials in one room and had decided to experiment with artistic crossfertilization, and I was to be their first specimen. Also corralled was Leonard Yakir who joined the project later. The concept was simple; to place a Canadian Filmmaker as an observer on the set with Canada's most successful Producer/Director Norman Jewison.

Jewison is often referred to as the film industry's most bankable director. His films seem to defy formulas –**The Russians are Coming, In the Heat of the Night, Fiddler on the Roof, Rollerball, Jesus Christ Superstar,** etc. – yet all have been box office successes, and have won a total of nine oscars. The hope was that through the process of watching Jewison film **F.I.S.T.**, an eight million dollar picture with Sylvester Stallone, some of his midas touch would rub off onto a younger generation of Canadians.

For me, the decision to become involved in the Jewison Project was a difficult one. For the past eight years, my work as a filmmaker has always been a creative partnership with John Watson. We have run "Insight Productions" on the basis of mutually taking responsibility for the direction of our films. We have shared everything equally, from the knocks to the successes. The Jewison Project appeared to select me to be whisked off to Hollywood, leaving him at the bottom end of the seesaw, wrestling with the day to day grind of running our company. John made the choice for me... he pushed me out the door and onto the plane. I left with a lump in my throat.

So there I was, a Pilgrim, clutching my little bag of possessions and an enormous bag of misconceptions.

Through the years the Hollywood machine has done a tremendous job of creating a myth – the magic camelot of movie making, the place where great sorcerers of the art are served by minor Gods so stupendous in their powers, that anything is possible. "You want an earthquake? OK! ready by

[+] The Council of Canadian Filmmakers, the Canadian Development Corp., The National Film Board of Canada and the Ontario Arts Council.

Pen Densham is a partner in Insight Productions, one of the most energetic and successful production companies operating in Toronto.

Thursday!" It would be fair to admit that I felt a little like a yokel when I first stepped through the gates of Century City and asked to be directed to the studio where "the Norman" Jewison was conducting make-up tests.

In the centre of a vast grid-strewn hangar was a tiny little cluster of lights and people, dwarfed by the vastness of the building that surrounded them. To my eye, the skeleton staff for the tests looked just like a documentary crew – a warming thought.

It was here that I met the cast of characters who were to appear "behind" the camera: Laszlo Kovaks, the DOP on "**F.I.S.T.**", whose work goes from **Easy Rider** to **New York, New York** and includes most of the Bogdanovitch movies, as well as **Shampoo** and **Five Easy Pieces**; Mike Westmore, the make-up man for **Rocky**, who was experimenting with ageing Stallone, an effect crucial to the plot of **F.I.S.T.**, which spans 30 years in the life of Johnny Kovak, the character Stallone was to play; Anthea Sylbert, the costume designer, with such films under her belt as **Julia, Chinatown, Shampoo, Carnal Knowledge** and **Rosemary's Baby**, her job being to impart the feeling of the depression years to the look of the cast; Richard MacDonald, the production designer, who has escaped from teaching at an English Art College and has imprinted his look on such films as **Marathon Man, Day of the Locusts, Far From The Madding Crowd** and **Jesus Christ Superstar**; John Rothwell, the publicity and public relations man for the production, who handled the uncredited task of diplomatically fending off the hords of press demanding Stallone (John and I became good friends, he had seen it all before – "Same thing with David McAllum when he was in the Man from U.N.C.L.E.; sometimes you chase the press and sometimes they chase you."); Pat Palmer and Larry De Waay, who were, respectively, associate producer and production manager, both men working with Jewison as a team. They helped him keep his sanity, looking out for potential problems and trying to solve them before they happened. **F.I.S.T.**, an eight-million dollar production, was brought in on time and on budget, despite a shooting schedule almost five months long. Much of the credit goes to their efforts.

The first thing I noted about these movie luminaries was that they didn't shine in the dark. In fact, they all looked reassuringly human.

F.I.S.T., the title of the movie, stands for The Federation of Interstate Truckers, a union. They story of **F.I.S.T.** follows the rise to power of Johnny Kovak, played by Stallone – a role vastly different from Rocky. Kovak is a young idealist who sets about organizing truckers in a strike against a large company, "Consolidated". He starts by confronting goons and company guards, and eventually climbs to prominence in the union. The film follows him through three decades. The union becomes the most powerful in America, and Stallone's character becomes corrupted by the power he wields as its leader.

Being an observer with no particular responsibility is a delightful position to the curious-minded, such as myself. Jewison and his crew were open and willing to allow me to quietly plant myself in the centre of any situation that was going down, and listen in. I was privy to their problems, their delights, their politics and their plans.

I quickly learned that the success of Hollywood lies not in its talent, which I believe could evolve anywhere; but in its flow of finances, its experience, and its organization. These people have played their roles many times (the props men alone seemed to have been around the business for a zillion years). The planning is free-form to some degree; ideas are integrated and rejected as the production evolves, but always there's a quick way to a solution within grasp, and enough funds to deliver it.

As my days with the **F.I.S.T.** production unfolded, I experienced many interesting comparisons between their process and the way John and I had developed the workings of Insight.

Jewison, Pat Palmer, and Larry DeWaay headed up the project, each facet of the process was carefully monitored by their overview. They took the responsibility for negotiating their deals, talking the town of Dubuque into allowing them to film on their streets, communicating with United Artists, casting, publicity, department budgets, etc. – all of it was centred through Jewison's three man team. They knew what was happening, and how and where to juggle.

I assimilated as I roved, sometimes very casually, and made notes of my random observations. On Jewison's desk I noticed Barbara Frum's book "As It Happened". Ross Tamblyn tried out for a part and wasn't chosen. The first draft of the script was very similar to the final version, only much longer. Credits are sometimes more important to an actor than money. One thespian was willing to sacrifice a substantial amount and not play in the film if his billing request wasn't met. In other cases, the reverse is true – some actors give free weeks in their contract, which means they're payed for eight weeks, but actually work twelve. In this way, they can inflate their weekly rates for their next job.

The make-up tests didn't work the first time; the successful look was much more subtle. Jewison watched **They Drive by Night**, a Raoul Walsh-Bogart movie on truckers.

I learned that a company working outside the state of its incorporation, such as a film company on location, can, under certain circumstances, be hit up for income taxes from both states. Jewison drives an unpretentious Ford Pinto, yet the costume designer will have custom-made clothes ordered for dozens of actors, right down to their shirts, and in some cases, two or three copies of these clothes will be required in case they need quick changes – no cheap proposition.

Twelve weeks of the film is on location in Dubuque, Iowa. This town had been left behind by time and now, for a while, its faded face was to be appreciated. Before initiating shooting, the whole film had been plotted out and its schedule planned, but this plan was changed quickly and frequently, as production requirements demanded it. The production process was one of applied finances and logic. Problems were tackled with the attitude that they could all be solved.

Sylvester Stallone with Bob New, John Watson and Pen Densham

The script called for a whole fleet of rare period trucks from the thirties, all looking new. So, you advertise, track down and repair twenty or so classic vehicles rescued from old barns across America, and assemble your collection in Dubuque. Two thousand miles away from Hollywood's facilities, the production company takes over a large empty factory, touches up the outside to enhance its thirties look, uses it as a set, and utilizes the inside for all the specialty trades, creating areas for production offices, wardrobes, paintshop, props, carpentry, special effects, etc.

A scene requiring several hundred actors is to be shot against a background which includes a three-story building, looking very white and new. It won't work for the era, so the building is painted a smoke-stained brown, while production goes on around it.

The film includes riot sequences where hundreds of inexperienced extras battle each other; the props department devises and manufactures hundreds of realistic-looking weapons – axe handles, tire irons, rocks, rifles, tree branches as clubs, etc., made of foam rubber and balsawood.

The crew who worked with Laszlo Kovacs, the DOP, had worked with him on many previous movies, and the value of this was proven in time saved. Lighting changes and camera setups were always accomplished with minimum fuss and direction, but not everything worked smoothly. When Norman was working with a large group of extras he was fitted with a wireless mike, patched into a loud speaker system. The plan went well until the pressure of shooting sent a few private and less-than-complimentary observations about the intelligence of a certain stuntman ringing around the set. The plug was pulled. At one point, when the shooting was on a rooftop, an electric generator caught fire. Instantly, the crew had extinguishers in action, seemingly pulled from nowhere.

Jewison and Stallone, who co-wrote the script, worked well together. Jewison would have his vision of a scene, but he would allow Stallone to explore its potentials. It was fascinating to watch Stallone improve the effect of a scene. From take to take, he would push for more emotion from his character, finding new ways of showing the feelings of Johnny Kovak.

Jewison controlled his set fairly tightly. You were always aware of his presence, and a voice which could float from a whisper to a whipcrack. He is very much of an actor himself – he played every part in the movie through his own mind before committing the real thing to film.

Undertaking the combined roles of producer and director required Jewison to view the filmmaking process both creatively and financially. This control enabled him to fine-tune his vision far more effectively than if he had been a director working for a producer. At lunch he would be catching up on the latest on his budget position, and at the same time worrying if anyone had taught his actress to operate an industrial sewing machine, for scenes to be shot later in the week.

Stallone was very committed to the concept of **F.I.S.T.** This was to be his first movie since **Rocky**. He told me he felt the story had bones, a solid foundation. I discussed scriptwriting with him; his theory for a film is that it should begin at a high point in the life of its character, a moment which will hold the audience and propel them into the film. In **Rocky**, it was a boxing fight where Rocky gets mad and wins his fight. In **F.I.S.T.**, Johnny Kovak quickly becomes involved in the injustice of a man who is fired on the whim of a belligerent foreman. Stallone also likes his films to come to an emotional peak, to leave the audience with a strong impact. **Rocky** is a prime example again.

It is very difficult to assess or total the input received from the **F.I.S.T.** process. I was delighted to find that I understood and communicated well with the Hollywood filmmakers. Their problems were the same as my own when producing, only on a far more massive scale. That scale was much less difficult to comprehend as I saw it peeled back like an onion. Day by day, layer by layer, I was able to follow the structure of the production from its initiation right the way through to a screening for "Time" magazine reviewers in New York, a procedure no less nerve-wracking for Jewison than for any other artist when facing the unpredictable reaction of the critics.

The process gave me confidence in dealing with scale. I saw people working on this sweeping drama who were similar to myself in their outlook and philosophy of film.

I discovered that there is no such thing as Hollywood magic, just people who have trained themselves to work to the highest standards of their profession and who have explored the financial strength that a larger market gives.

I saw mistakes and successful experiments, anger and laughter. I saw time wasted and time gambled with, and won when the weather cooperated. I was also reinforced with the reality of the film game – a large budget is no guarantee of success. The best bet is a confident belief in high quality standards, and a commitment to entertain the audience with every essence of the movie's potential.

....All the stuff we do here. □

The new look of the Direction générale du cinéma du Québec

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Moitié Toi, Moitié Moi
Capsule sur la salle d'accouchement
La règle de 4
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Autoroute
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Que faire quand les freins manquent?
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how to shoot a rubber gun

Once upon a time, in Montreal, there was a group of people who carved out their own physical and psychological space, and then made films about it all. *Montreal Main* began the story, and *The Rubber Gun* completes it. The people have split, the curtain has come down. And Montreal is the poorer for it.

by P.M. Massé-Connolly

Allan Bozo Moyle, director of The Rubber Gun, making a point. **photo: Lois Seigel**

I remember one night Bozo (Allan Moyle) telling about the traumas of choosing a title for a film. At one point there was a mural stretched half-way across his loft scribbled with possible titles. I had always assumed **The Rubber Gun** got it's name the night Pam Holmes and Pammy Marchant were supposed to meet Peter Brawley and Pierre Robert for a night of dancing at the limelight (Stanley St. below St. Catherine). When Marchant and Holmes got there, the bouncer told them there were no girls allowed in that night.

Highly insulted as only Holmes and Marchant can be insulted, they "held up" the bouncer, and walked into the club, the only two women there. Of course, it was not a *real* gun, but the bouncer didn't know that and called the police. By further "holding up" a few other people they all managed to leave before the *law* arrived.

Then they made their way to the now defunct Orient Express (McKay St. below Sherbrooke). In the Orient that night was a man who owed Pierre Robert money, but the debt had been forgotten a long time ago. Pierre sat down next to him, and saying a casual "Hi", he stuck the gun into his old friend's ribs. No one has ever forgotten the look on that man's face.

I don't know if that's how the film got it's name but the rest of the story is true.

Then there was the Christmas, prior to the release of **Montreal Main** when Brawley called me up to a very *private* little Christmas party being held at a rather opulent Sherbrooke Street address. Everyone there was dressed opulently, and at midnight, three maids served an opulent Christmas dinner in the opulent dining room.

Everyone was waiting for Stephen Lack to arrive. When he made his entrance, as only Mr. Lack can make an entrance, he was wearing jeans, his hair was an opulent mess, and his shirt was hanging out from under his sweater.

I know you've all been dying for me to get here so you can get stoned, but really, I don't have anything.

Then he escorted a select group into an opulent bathroom, where the temperature dropped considerably.

Then there was a taxi ride to Lack's now defunct loft (Coloniale & Prince Arthur), where the temperature continued to drop. To be fair, though, part of this was due to the fact that Lack's loft had one outstanding feature; it wasn't heated, something you're apt to notice during the Christmas season if you live in Montreal. And now, to Lack's amusement, he was taking pictures of us consuming our after dinner anesthetic. In the chaos I wondered how he and his crew were going to pull off a feature film.

I love John Hofsess' line describing **Montreal Main** as "a plucky dance in the face of adversity"... he wasn't kidding; no heat is adverse to me.

When **Montreal Main** opened at the Elysée (Milton & Clark) to a standing-room-only crowd, I was stunned. In spite of the odds – and they seemed endless – they had done it. The cast, and their friends stayed in the lobby during most of the films, checking now and then, to see which lines had gotten the laughs. Stephen commented that "the reviews will be great, but who were those rude people out in the lobby who made so much noise?", which was when one of the Bronfmans' walked out of the film.

Within Mr. Bronfman's earshot, Stephen commented that "there goes a man with *silver* hubcaps on *his* car..."

After the screening, 500 people made their way down to The Silver steamed hotdog stand (lower St. Lawrence Blvd.) where the last scene in the film had been shot. There were free hotdogs and cokes to celebrate this first post-premiere party, and Marchant managed to hustle enough quarters to take 4 for 25's of almost everyone there, all the time the regulars on the Main wondering why their hotdog stand was so packed, and on a Wednesday night. Even the police stopped, curious to see what the commotion was about.

Perhaps the biggest surprise, though, was when not only the English press decided it loved the film, but the French press ran page after page of rave reviews, and ran huge shots of Johnny Sutherland.

photo: P. M. Massé-Connolly

Lewis Furey (right) at an opening of Lack's pictures at Vehicule Art.

That same strange thing happened when **L'Ange et la femme** (a wonderfully prurient film by Gilles Carle, starring Carole Laure and Lewis Furey who scored both that film and **The Rubber Gun**) had it's premiere. It was by invitation only, which meant that the bulk of the audience was French, and Lack, who had five minutes in the film, and the only English lines, received unanimous and spontaneous applause after his lines. Stunned again, I looked at Lack who looked like a cynical five-year-old on Christmas morning who just got more than he had asked for.

A few years ago I had walked into the Rainbow Bar & Grill (Stanley St. above St. Catherine), and asked the bartender if anyone good was playing that night.

He told me, yes, there was this new guy, Lewis Furey, and he was great, I shouldn't miss him. He couldn't really describe his music but it was something well worth catching.

The bartender was right, and I went back every night, and so did Lack who would lie on the floor, and take roll after roll of film. Soon, Lack was taking roll after roll of film at the Hotel Nelson (Place Jacques Cartier), while Lewis played to ovation after ovation, charming everyone, strolling through the audience with his viola and singing "Louise". Then one night Ahmet Ertegun was in the audience, signed Lewis up to a record contract, and he was off to Hollywood.

Lack later did both of his album jackets, and co-wrote "Top Ten Sexes" with him on the second album, "The Humours of Lewis Furey".

P.M. Massé-Connolly took part, and wrote things down, and photographed it all. She also recently made her acting début in Lois Seigel's Recipe to Cook a Clown.

Peter Brawley, twice busted. **photo: P. M. Massé-Connolly**

March 1974; Brawley had just returned from a three-month stay in Miami to begin work on **The Rubber Gun**,... a project that was ostensibly Bozo's and Stephen's while Frank Vitale pursued commercial filmmaking. Frank, though, ended up shooting most of **The Rubber Gun**, along with Jim Lawrence, a master still photographer as well, who introduced Lack to cibachrome, which was much in evidence at his last one-man show (at Vehicule).

The first audio takes were supposed to take place on a Sunday afternoon at Lack's loft, but a storm made things almost impossible. Brawley was horrified; "I knew it, I knew it, as soon as I get back it snows, I never should have come back, I could have stayed you know, I knew it, I knew it..."

I was allowed to sit in on the first audio takes for the film; Bozo just suggested what the scene might be about and the rest was improvised. Most of the dialogue took place between Brawley and Holmes, and centered around turkey sandwiches, toasted turkey sandwiches, old turkey sandwiches, and *cold* turkey sandwiches. Together, both on and off camera, Brawley and Holmes are absolutely brilliant, and it was great fun watching them perform like this. Then they would play back the tapes, note down the best lines, and improvise over and over again. This probably accounts for a lot of the film's spontaneity, and that documentary feeling.

In the summer of 1975 Stephen Lack employed the services of a very nice and *very* patient man named Rick Fisher, to construct a leather mask for him. There were endless fittings as it had to be "just perfect" because, after all, Lack's concept was "just brilliant", as I was reminded over and over again.

The following Halloween, it was finally ready, and Lack decided to wear it with a simple navy trenchcoat and go out trick or treating. I know of at least one glass of wine that was thrown into his face – the mask seemed to have triggered some hostitility, and was strangely unnerving. I went out as the bride of Dracula and Pam Holmes went out as Big Bird from Sesame Street but she had lost all of her feathers by the end of the evening.

Since then, Lack's mask has appeared in Italian Vogue, The New York Times, and is put to its best advantage when worn with Lack's white tuxedo.

Rick Fisher, the man who built the mask, has since been putting his talents to full-time use as a commercial artist, with a concentration on record jackets, notably for Toulouse, Boule Noire, and most recently a new group, Minuit.

Spring 1975; I was walking down St. Catherine Street when I did a double take and realized I had just walked past Brawley and Lack. As far as I knew he was in India, and now he was here, on the street, 30 pounds lighter, pale and ashen. We slipped into a restaurant, and I kept saying what's wrong, what's wrong?

Stephen: Oh he's just a little shaky, jet lag, and he's got a *terrible* cold.

He had pneumonia, and had just been busted at the airport. In a classic confession, he had gone through customs, and when asked what was in the suitcase, he replied; "Books, religious books, you know, presents for my friends." The customs man opened the books and out slid 30 pounds of hash. Brawley turned white and said; "Great fucking packing job!"

I had just put myself on the waiting list to be admitted into the Allan Memorial Institute, for, as a spokesman for Mrs. Gerald Ford, the former first lady, put it, "I was not

addicted to any drugs, I was merely trying to overcome a dependence on them"... I adore those press releases, and I have to admit I am in awe of Mrs. Ford's courage, both past and present.

A year later I had survived "rehabilitation", but Brawley was still awaiting sentencing after endless hearings.

March 1976; Early on a Sunday morning, Brawley was rushed to the Royal Victoria after suffering a minor heart attack, and upon his release he completed filming of the **Rubber Gun** – the scene, in fact, where he gets busted in Windsor Station. Then, in the evening, he attended a huge party in his honor, a sort of Birthday-Going-Away-Party, and the following morning, stood trial, and was sentenced. It took three months before my visiting papers came through, and I could see Brawley again. More "plucky dances and faces of adversity".

We did visit often, though, and Tony Roman, fondly known as the little Hitler of Quebec Rock and Roll gave a benefit concert for him, and managed to have a crew of 40-odd light and sound men, all of whom, incidentally, knew Brawley.

Miss Julie Botner, from the fashionable suburb of Hampstead, donated cartons and cartons of fresh fruit. We were piling these cartons into the trunk of Lack's "batmobile" and I kept saying "But Stephen, they'll never let it through, the guards will take a fit"... (anything you bring an inmate has to be cleared in a sort of "Customs" ritual, and food is always discouraged, sometimes prohibited altogether)...

Lack: We'll just say we're from a very rich, very psychotic, and pleasure-oriented part of town... The fruit got through after we agreed it would be raffled off to the inmates, except for a carton of cherries which Lack insisted Brawley *must* have.

Brawley was released from prison on parole a little after a year, although he was just recently refused permission to attend the viewing of **The Rubber Gun** at the Little Carnegie Cinema in New York City, and the subsequent reception at the Canadian Consulate.

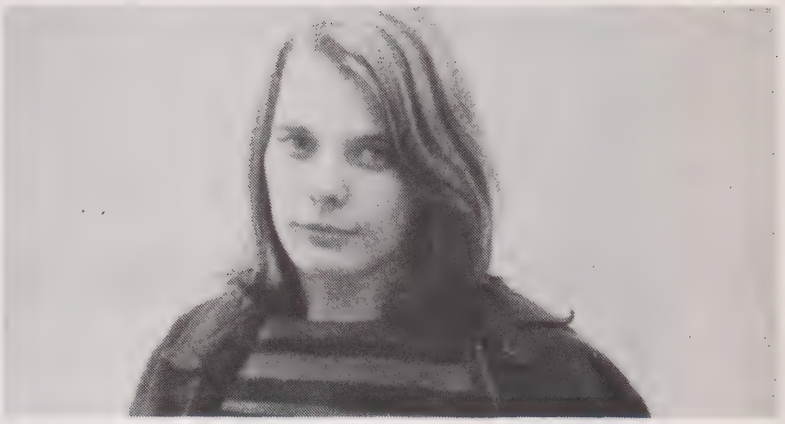
Pam Holmes is living out in the Eastern Townships with her daughter Rainbow, one of the delights of **The Rubber Gun**.

Pammy Marchant, recently married to Nik Cohn, who wrote "Rock Dreams" and the article which lead to the film **Saturday Night Fever**, is attending jewelry design school, a long time interest of hers, in New York. Bozo (Allan Moyle) and Stephen Lack are living there as well; they've both been promoting the film, and Lack just opened a one-man show of his paintings and photos in the lobby of Little Carnegie Cinema, concurrent with the opening of **The Rubber Gun**.

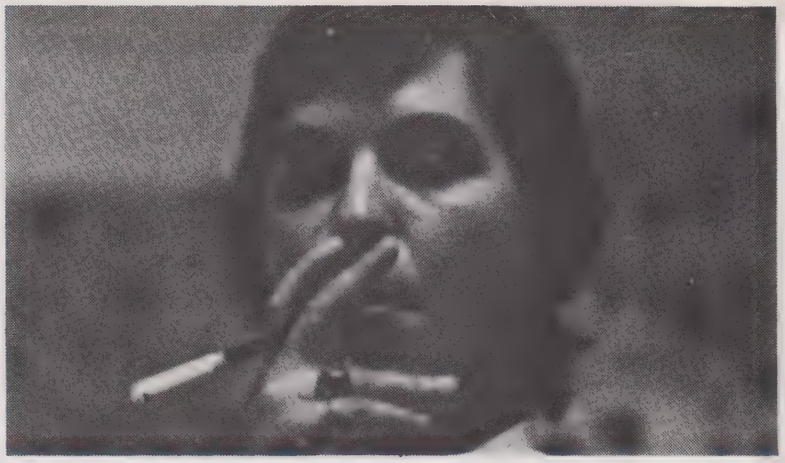
Pierre Robert, who was terribly photogenic in his film debut, remains an enigma, although I have heard he would like to pursue a career in films.

Eric Bloch who was the camera man on **Montreal Main** is rumored to have just finished a screenplay of his own, which sounds very promising.

Frank Vitale is married, and living in upper New York State.



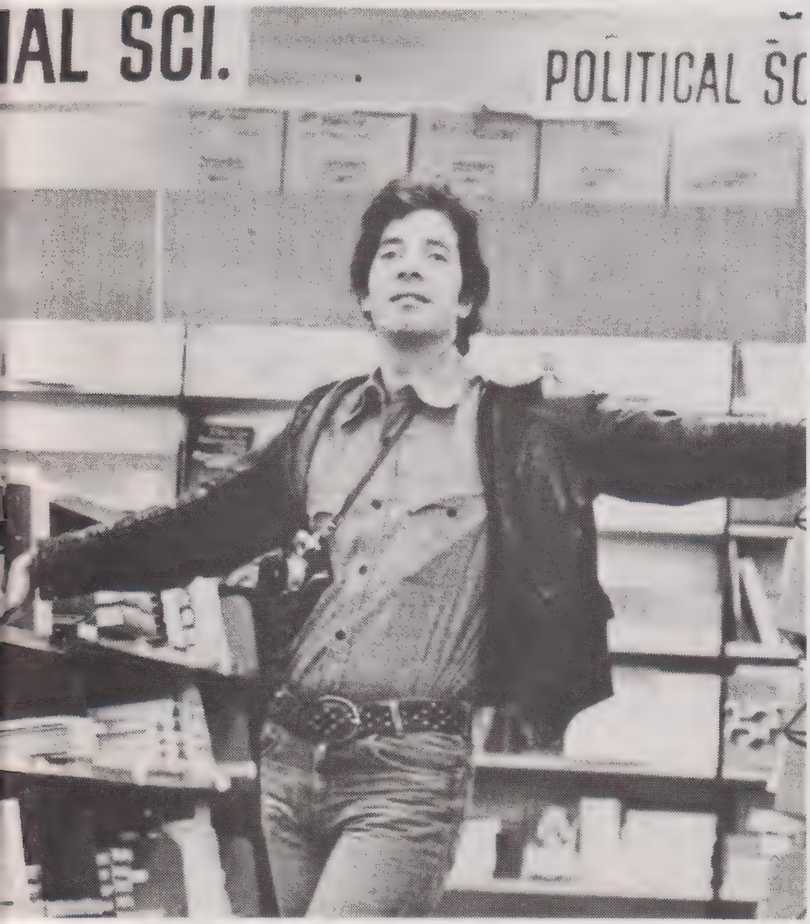
photos: P. M. Massé-Connolly



Father (Pierre Robert-top) and mother (Pam Holmes) of Rainbow, the only actor

Steven Lack, or, 'What's a nice boy like you doing in a bookstore like this?'

who could steal Lack's fire.



In a recent letter from New York, dated March 11th, 1978, Lack writes; "... your package arrived today just after "I Love Lucy" but before "Hollywood Squares", these are the things I know, you understand. There is a talk show with a gushing little evil Bozo-type called Stanley Seigel, who had Kirk Douglas on.

He asked Kirk if he would do him a favor, would he give him a kiss like the one he gave in that great film **The Brotherhood**? Well, Mr. Douglas smiled (one of those famous Actor's Union smiles), and said 'No Stanley, and I'll tell you why; when I did it in the movie I found that I really enjoyed it so much that I had to cut it out.'

Those are just some of the great moments here in New York..." and a lot of other stuff that I can't print.

Earlier that week I had interviewed Brawley and here is part of the transcribed tape;

P.M. *... to what do you think you owe this fatigue?*
Brawley: Oh,... just life's sophistication I guess.

P.M. *We were looking through the want ads last week, seeing if there might be a job for you, and you said, frankly, all you wanted to do, was go to Hollywood and get an Oscar. Do you have any comment on that?*
Brawley: I think, considering the people who have won the Academy Award... I mean there have been greats, and there have been near-greats.

P.M. *In what category do you put yourself?*
Brawley: Well, I think, as far as I'm concerned, that as far as my last film is concerned, **The Rubber Gun**, I'm definitely a best supporting actor, I mean let's not kid ourselves, I'm supporting everyone in the film.

P.M. *That's very candid of you to say at this point.*
Brawley: Thank you, Miss P.M.

P.M. *Would you like another scotch, Peter? Is that all right if I call you Peter?*
Brawley: Oh, of course, do call me Peter, but I'm fine with the little drink I have here.

P.M. *What do you like to be called? Peter, Pete, or...*
Brawley: I think I like to be called Peter... or Pete... but I think the day of the facetious nickname is definitely behind us... I think the morality rate of our naiveté has a lot to do with the dispensing of our trivial nicknames... I think it's about time we got a definite assessment, let's call it an assessment of our situation... I think one thing we have to do... let's say the way we address each other... let's take you, I think we'll eventually get around to calling you by your real name instead of P.M., just simply because it's your name.

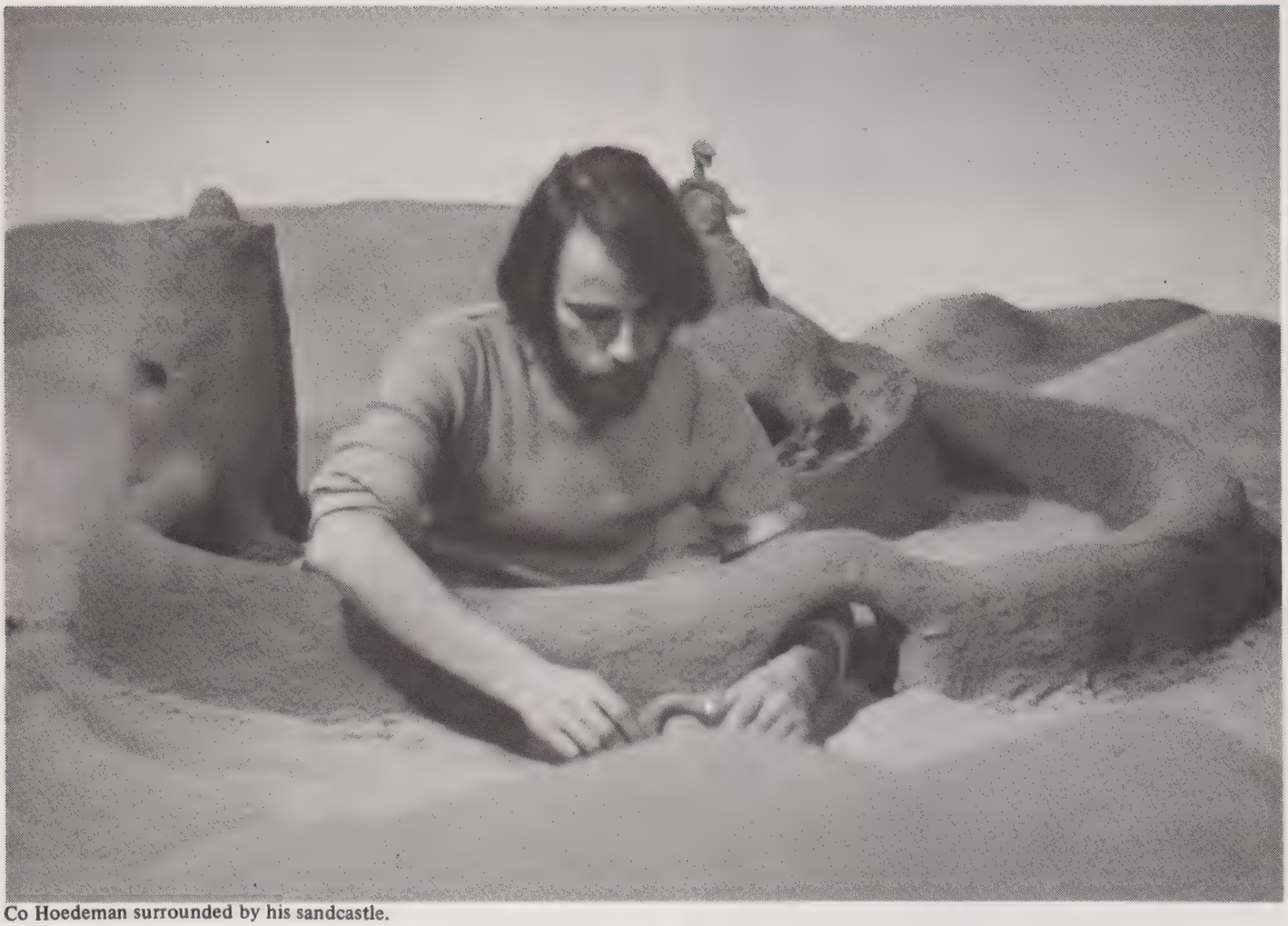
P.M. *What was the highlight of your evening?*
Brawley: I think we have to stop looking for highlights in the course of our evenings. □

There was a curiously straight screening of the film in New York City on March 29, followed by a reception given by the Canadian Consulate General. (One of the waiters remarked that the guests were eating the centerpiece.) **The Rubber Gun** opened at the Little Carnegie Theatre on April 24, 1978. Ed.

co hoedeman

It is difficult to imagine the amount of concentration, patience, and faith it takes to work over a sandbox for two years, day in and day out, in a windowless basement room and to come up with an Oscar winning animated film. Animators are a special breed, and Joan Irving talked with Co Hoedeman about his work. Michael Mills gives us a short review of *The Sand Castle*.

by Joan Irving



Co Hoedeman surrounded by his sandcastle.

castles in the sand

You'll not find Co Hoedeman at the National Film Board without a guide. The studio he is occupying now, which will be his headquarters for possibly another 16 months while he finishes **Le grotocean**, a new film, is *somewhere* in the basement. He's set up an island of easy-chair comfort there, surrounded by the widely flung trappings of the film in progress and offers salted peanuts and beer to make it pleasant, but he agrees the windowless environment is not ideal.

At the end of the day, however, he will drive for almost an hour to go home to the family farm, near the Ontario-Quebec border.

Co Hoedeman is an animation artist. The winner of several awards for his earlier films, this year he made the pilgrimage to Hollywood and came back, happy but not strutting, with an Oscar for **The Sand Castle**.

Puppet animation has become his specialty because, he says, he found out early on that he was "good with his hands", and, coincidentally, that he couldn't draw. His style of three-dimensional animation, though it is a widely practiced technique in the European countries – such as Czechoslovakia – which have a tradition of puppet theatre, is not a common technique in Canada. Hoedeman estimates there are three or four other filmmakers here animating with puppets.

His tools are simple enough – three boxes of sand were used in making **The Sand Castle**, and the characters of **Le grotocean** are small but colorful foam rubber concoctions that wait to impress.

Designed with the fantasy realm children favor in mind, Hoedeman's films nevertheless tackle broader concerns. The theme of **The Sand Castle**, he says, is "man versus nature. I tried to show in the film that one can't outdo the other. We have to live side by side and make the best of it."

Hoedeman, now 37, arrived in Canada from Amsterdam in 1965 and joined the National Film Board, where he has been associated with the French language animation section.

●

Cinema Canada: *Tell us how you felt, being at the Academy Awards and on stage in front of that audience?*

Co Hoedeman: I was very tense while Paul Williams and Jodie Foster, who were there to announce 'And the winner is...', were naming the nominated films. I didn't know it but first they screen all the films. They started with Ishu Patel's **The Bead Game**. I was so confused that I leaned over to Ishu, who was sitting beside me, and said, 'You got it'. His wife told me no, no. I sat back and tried to collect my mind again, because they do make you rather nervous. They work you up to the tip, the very tip of a pyramid. Then they announced 'And the winner is **The Sand Castle**, Co Hoedeman'. My immediate reaction was that it was about time. I wanted to get it over with – not that I should be the winner, but that they finally announced who it was.

Walking up there I was telling myself to remain collected. I had done my homework and knew what I wanted to say – I wasn't going to say the kind of things people always say, thanking their father and mother and all the animals in the stable. I thought that it would be a good occasion to thank the Canadian people and the filmmakers, and also to say it had all been made possible through the National Film Board.

Joan Irving is a freelance Montreal writer who is presently working in the drama unit at the CBC.

Your response was, as you mention , not in the tradition. Why did you decide to pay tribute to the Film Board on that occasion?

I thought I should say something which I felt was honest – a no-nonsense statement. I had no idea what its impact would be. It was a personal statement; I felt very strongly that it was an appropriate thing to say. When I came back, by the reaction of people, I knew I hadn't said the wrong thing.

You've won many awards before...

Yes, I've won some.

Let's say many. Was it important to you to win an Oscar?

Not for myself so much, but I think it has had an incredible effect on the Canadian film industry, in particular the National Film Board. I think all our animated films will benefit from this prize. Personally, winning the Grand Prix at Annecy with **The Sand Castle** was more important to me because I was among my peers, my colleagues. But who knows where Annecy is? Who knows what that festival is all about? The fact that the Oscar is so widely known makes it very prestigious, to the outside world, though not necessarily to me. That sounds strange, I guess.

You said earlier that your first thought when you heard that **The Sand Castle** *had been nominated was that 'Oscars aren't for Canadians'...*

Let me clarify that. The Academy Awards is primarily an American Festival, so the Academy members look at their own films first, emotionally. For that reason it's hard for a non-American film to win. Before the voting system was revised, people could vote even if they hadn't seen all the films, so sometimes knowing that a film had been made by so and so from the United States, the members would vote for it. Now those who vote have to have seen the whole program first.

How did you rate your chances of winning?

Well, I was in a rather uncomfortable position you know, because Ishu Patel's film was also in the running. He's a very good friend and it felt strange to be competing against a good friend. I was, of course, curious about the other two films, John and Fait Hubley's film **The Doonesburry Special** and James Picker's **Jimmy the C**. Picker's was a plastecine film based on the song "Georgia". It was really funny. Considering that animation is still the ultimate in cinema entertainment, I felt that the winning film would have to be funny. The NFB films were, I suspected, too heavy, too serious, and I didn't have that many hopes of winning.

But he did win. Co mentioned to me later that the strangest thing about it all was that people came up to him later to ask for autographs! When he was invited to the recent University of Southern California film course as a special guest to present the animation program, the evening of screening and discussion drew an audience of 1800 people.

I've seen two recent films, **The Sand Castle** *and* **Tchou Tchou.** **Tchou Tchou** *is made with highly colored wooden building blocks, while in* **The Sand Castle** *you used a very fluid substance, one almost without color. Do you want to talk about those two different techniques?*

I don't try to stick with any particular technique. In **Tchou Tchou** I built a story and a whole fantasy world with blocks. In **The Sand Castle** I wanted to create a different world again, one with sand. You have to ask yourself what the sand is all about: in **Tchou Tchou**, what wood and blocks are all about. With the sand it came down to smooth forms, no sharp edges. The characters had to be created to fit the landscape. You work with the different textures of sand, even the different colors. I had to discover all that. But technique is always open to me.

Are you experimenting with different techniques for the sake of experimenting, or are you...

I did that, like all filmmakers do, because there is so much to be learned. But it's like learning and teaching yourself how to hold your hammer. The moment you have discovered how to hold it, you should not need to think of it anymore, and rather, you can concentrate on the subject. Animation is a rather big hammer; there are so many different facets to it. I've spent a great deal of time and many many years to master – to try to master – all the different animation techniques. Now it's more a question of trying to find an interesting subject and developing it into a good story. Then you think of the tools and technique needed to make it come out best.

Creatures creating themselves.

Where do you go for your subjects?

Anywhere. It just happens that I do a lot of daydreaming. My mind is continuously working. You see something and you translate it into film... It would be nice to make a film about rope or about metal. All those different ideas come and go. When you think you've got an interesting idea, you give it some extra thought. That way slowly, slowly it evolves in your mind.

Both **Tchou Tchou** *and* **The Sand Castle** *were made with materials children know well. Do you try to relate to children in particular?*

Some of my other films were not made as children's films but those two were. And I feel it's important that you make a film for children with material that children can identify with. However, I think sand is something universal; adults, as well as children, identify with it. But since I am often with children, it inspires and helps me to develop my own ideas.

Do you work with children apart from your own?

Being with your own children, it all happens so casually. If you do it with others, say in a classroom context, the situation easily becomes forced.

Some of the figures in **The Sand Castle** *were almost mythological; they don't appeal only to children.*

No, because the whole story is an accumulation of different ideas and it is me who then interprets them. I design the characters and interpret them in a way that is not necessarily childlike.

Do you think you'll always work with fantasy or the fantastic? The film you are working on now, **Le grotocean** *is based on an underwater environment.*

I've made a number of films based on existing stories, but I feel most comforable working with my own ideas, and creating a fantasy world. You can explore the world – the whole mythical world with animation. There are no limits. If you work out your own ideas you know what your limitations are and you try to work with that.

How do you keep going over a period of, say, two years on one film?

Very easily. Each day is a new day. It's like knitting a sweater of many different patterns. Each day you stitch some more and change the pattern. The fact that there's always something new happening keeps me going quite nicely, but I must admit that sometimes it's pretty painstaking. The actual shooting demands a lot of concentration. When you can see the results on the screen and can say, 'I think I've succeeded in conveying a particular idea'. That keeps you floating.

How do you feel about **The Sand Castle** *after having worked on it for so long?*

I still enjoy it because it serves its purpose very well, I think. Children identify with it and love it. The thing that worried me while I was working on the film was how adults would react to it. And I feel that there again I succeeded because there is something of the child inside of us, and it comes out. To succeed in all ways is not easy. You don't know if your film will succeed when you first finish it. Screenings for your colleagues here at the Film Board or anywhere will not tell you. The film has to prove itself in time, not at festivals but with plain exposure. People talk about it and there is a snowball effect. If you succeed, it's through this snowball effect.

How will Canadians be able to see your film?

To start with, it will have theatrical distribution. It took quite a while to arrange, but it has already been shown in Ottawa. Also, the film is available to the general public, free of charge. Then there are the special screenings, an evening here, an evening there.

Have all your films had as wide a distribution as **The Sand Castle** *will have?*

Each film differs. Some of my films had theatrical distribution while others did well in general distribution. One of the first films I made was a documentary and it has been widely screened in schools. So you don't just make films to be seen in the theatre. You make them for specific audiences too.

You work with a fairly small team. If, for instance, we were to compare the animation studio you're presently working in with The Disney Studio where they are working in much larger teams...

The reason they would be working with such large numbers is that they have deadlines. At the NFB it's not necessarily like that. I can make my film entirely by myself, or I can work with a large crew. But the type of films I make don't require large crews. **The Sand Castle** was made entirely from start to end, except for the music and editing, by myself. There are two people working with me on **Le grotocean.** But the fact is I've learned to master a number of things. I can do the camera work and lighting so it's not always necessary to have a lot of help.

Did you come to Canada expecting to find work at the Film Board, and hoping to work there in a personal way, and have the opportunity to develop.

No. There were a number of different reasons I came to Canada. For one, the adventure. I was still young enough to want to find out what the other side of the world was all about. Another reason was that living conditions in Holland were rather difficult. When you're young and want to start a family, living accommodation there is difficult to come by. So we just decided to try another country.

You and your wife?

Yes. And it happened to be Canada because I felt most sympathetic towards Canada. In addition, of course, I knew the National Film Board was here, but I didn't set my hopes on working here. In the back of my mind though, I wanted to continue filmmaking. As it happened, within the first two weeks of our arrival it was settled, and I began working here.

Would you be able to work the way you do if you were not at the NFB.

I don't think I can answer that because I never really tried to work outside the Film Board. But I have seen how other people do it. We are in an incredibly favorable situation; I don't have to hunt for money in order to express my free ideas. I don't have to sacrifice my ideas to please a producer, or an investor for that matter.

In your lifetime, are you going to have time, artistically speaking, to make something other than animation films?

I think I'll probably always do animation films. But life has much more to offer than just filmmaking. Being on the farm with our animals – my wife is a farmer – is one step in that direction. I love photography and darkroom work, things like that. Whatever I do, I'm a professional filmmaker, and I love making films. But not 24 hours a day. □

The Sand Castle

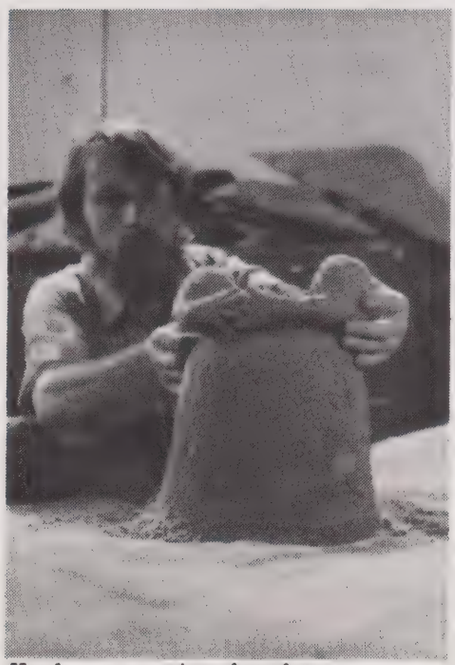
d: Co Hoedeman, **ph:** Co Hoedeman, **ed:** Jacques Drouin, **sd:** Co Hoedeman, **re-rec:** Jean-Pierre Joutel, **m:** Norman Roger, **Administration:** Jacqueline Marquis, **p:** Gaston Sarault, **p.c.** National Film Board (1977) **col:** 16mm blown up to 35 mm, **running time:** 13 minutes, 12 seconds.

Sandcastle is a delightful animated children's film. The central character in the story is the Sandman, who is revealed by the wind and the drifting sand. He comes to life and molds himself a mate and a whole menagerie of funny and sometimes erotic creatures. They romp around the sand-dunes and together build a sandcastle which is to be their home. Inevitably the wind returns and threatens; their time has come. Soon they are covered by drifting sand and the cycle is complete.

A simple story, but then the best ones are.

The film uses standard puppet animation techniques of molding the form of the character over a wire frame. This allows for the puppet to be rigid while filming one frame at a time but pliable enough for the animator to make the desired movements.

However, this film did not break away from the limitations that seem to be imminent in puppet-animated films. The timing and 'pacing' (acting) tends to be too mechanical. Some of the creatures could have moved a lot faster to contrast with the heavier, slower ones. In a film without dialogue it is only movement which gives us an insight into personality. Puppet animators shy away from "extreme actions" (Distortions of the character for one or two frames of the film to add punch to a movement.) I wonder why? Because this is common practice with 'all animators'. Unfortunately the music did nothing to alleviate this situation and tended to plod along and serve as nothing more then background filler.



Hoedeman arranging a love dance.

However, these observations should not detract from the tremendous creative and technical effort that Co Hoedeman has put together to produce this film. It truly earns its success.

This year the voting precedents for the Academy Awards were changed for the animated and live short subjects. Only peer groups were allowed to cast votes for the winners this year. A great improvement over previous years, where, although peer groups would nominate nominees the final voting was thrown open to the entire Academy, many of whom had not even seen the short subjects.

So we can look forward to the NFB being a regular winner of Oscars from now on.

Michael Mills

Michael Mills is a Montreal-based animator who has made, among other films, "The Happy Prince".

beverly shaffer

From McGill to Boston and "Zoom" and back again to Montreal and Studio D at the NFB was not the route that Beverly Shaffer ever imagined would lead her to Hollywood. But her straightforward look at one of Canada's children did the trick. Below, she speaks about her techniques and Tom Waugh reviews her film, *I'll Find a Way*.

touching people

by Alexandra McHugh and Susan Schouten Levine

Beverly Shaffer looking dreamy with her Oscar.

"The show was pretaped. I went back to my hotel room and there was a bottle of champagne and some cookies waiting for me. I sat down in my room still dressed up and turned on my TV; and I said, "Gee, I'm a really important person!" Here I am drinking champagne and watching myself on TV."

Beverly Shaffer, April 1978

The show was "90 Minutes Live". Beverly Shaffer was there because she had, the week before, won an Academy Award for her NFB documentary **I'll Find A Way.** *A Montreal native, graduate of McGill (in Religion), and former high school teacher (of History and English), Beverly Shaffer became determined in 1968 to join the lucky one percent who manage to earn their living in a more enjoyable way. She earned her Master's Degree in film from Boston University, presenting for her thesis a "very simple film" based on the Laporte kidnapping crisis of 1971. The film is a one-actor drama in which a man in a jail cell talks about how he came to be radicalized. The camera moves closer and closer. The next five years she spent at WGBH TV, "the best place to be working in Boston", while living in Cambridge. Two and a half years ago she returned to Montreal to work in the just-formed Women's Unit at the National Film Board.* **Cinema Canada** *spoke with her last week:*

Beverly Shaffer: My most important asset as a filmmaker is that I am a really good interviewer and am genuinely interested in people. I'm not that much of a talker myself but I can get people talking about themselves. I ask very specific questions which a lot of people are dying to know but they're afraid to ask because they're too polite.

Last week I was in Toronto with a girlfriend. She was curious to know about Hollywood; she asked certain questions. Then we went over to her brother's. Her brother asked about a million juicy, detailed questions: who'd you see? what was he wearing? what did he say? what did you say? and my girlfriend said to her brother 'Wow, you are a fantastic interviewer. I wanted to know all those things but just didn't think to ask.' Well, I ask all those things too, little detailed questions and personal things. A lot of people would have been afraid to ask Nadia (the child in **I'll Find A Way**) direct questions about her handicap and about people looking at her and calling her names. I knew that I could ask her those questions without offending her; and after the filming she wasn't distressed at all...

I feel I have learned a craft. I documented Nadia's life. One person who saw the film **Benoit** (the latest in the Children of Canada Series) said, "It's Beverly's Benoit," and I said, "Of course, it's Benoit as Beverly sees him; you don't make films about a person objectively, you make films about a person as you see him."

I'm imposing a structure. I like to set a lot of situations up. In a documentary I feel I'm documenting from my point of view.

I had a whole talk with the cameraman who felt that I was too closed-minded, knowing too specifically what I wanted. I don't feel that's a danger. I like to do my research very, very carefully, and if something good happens unexpectedly, that's great but I don't go hoping for the unexpected. I go hoping to get what I want.

Would you ever make a spontaneous, unplanned film?

I'd be too nervous. The night before I would stay awake and say what am I going to do tomorrow. For a cameraman, it's not so satisfying to be told specifically what to film but for me the product is important, and I know specifically what I want all the time.

You seem able to decide very quickly about what you want.

Yes, but if you had met Nadia you would have said, 'that girl's good', and if you'd met her neighbors you would have said, 'they'd be good'. There was only one scene that was straight off the cuff. I wanted to do one scene to show Toronto, and one scene with Nadia and Craig to bring out their humor. At the last minute I said, "The CN Tower", and that was kind of frantic, calling the Tower and saying we'll be there in two hours. I really don't like to work like that at all but I knew I had that afternoon to film a sequence and I wanted another scene in the film. Everything else was planned quite carefully, the time and the place and how long it took and everything.

Are you ever surprised?

Sometimes I get excited. "Ooh, it looks so good," I'll say.

I have a general idea of what the finished film should look like since I bring in the narration with the material. Of course 'my name is' is at the beginning. Sometimes I don't know the exact order of the scenes but most of the time I do. Who was it who said that you know you have a film when you know the opening scene, the closing scene and the first shot of every scene. I do know that.

Did you learn this when you were at school or is it just part of the way you are?

It's my personality type. And when I was working at "Zoom" I remember the executive producer would say, "You have to have a focus and every scene has to relate to that focus." There's a certain theme in each film and I would hope that each scene comments on it.

Did you start getting interested in children at "Zoom"? (WGBH TV's program for children).

Yes. I was finding kids who would be subjects for five-minute films from all over the states, doing the research.

Would the director at "Zoom" pay attention to your suggestions?

I was always disappointed in what I saw. It wasn't that the films were bad on "Zoom" but the kid was so much better. I felt like I got more out of the kid when I did the research than what we saw on the film. I also thought the idea would be dynamite for Canada.

How did you find the little boy for **Beautiful Lennard Island** *(one of the NFB's Children of Canada Series)? The people in one audience were overheard saying he would grow up to be Prime Minister and asking "Who was the genius who found this child?"*

It's very arbitrary. I was going to British Columbia because I'd never been there and I tried to think of what kinds of lifestyles I could look for and one idea I had was of a kid who lives on a lighthouse. Also I wanted a kid who doesn't go to

Alexandra McHugh is a Ph. D candidate in Communications at McGill University and Susan Schouten Levine is a filmmaker and teacher at Concordia University.

a regular school but who does correspondance. So the coast-guard gave me the names of three families on lighthouses who had kids the right age and I went to see all three at one shot; the coast guard was kind enough to take me in a helicopter. Steven was the best. When I literally dropped from the sky this guy started talking right away "I'm Steven Thomas Holland" and he shook my hand and he had so many stories to tell me. He's more of an adult's kid than a kid's kid. I just stayed a half hour that time.

It sounds very simple, as though anyone could do the same thing; but no one seems to be that logical about it. And the children all seem to be very exceptional.

I'm looking for articulate ones. I don't like to deal with middle class families since they get enough exposure in the media. All my kids are working class. None of the kids are the smartest in their schoool. They're very interesting kids; that's the quality I'm looking for. The point I want to make about Nadia is that although she is crippled, she is like other kids. She just happens to be more articulate. I like to pick kids who are a little bit different, but I want to show that they're really the same as everyone else.

Shaffer in a well organized office.

What do children think about the children in the films?

Kids really love it. How many times do they have the chance to be spoken to by another kid in the media? I think it's having the effect I want, which is to expose them to other ways of life and show them that the differences aren't so bad. I hope it minimizes discrimination. As a filmmaker, you want to have some effect on the people who watch your films, you want to make a statement.

Why did you use the framing device in **I'll Find A Way**, *so the women's crew could be seen at the beginning.*

It is, in fact, a male cameraman who shot the film, but everyone else is a woman. I wanted to leave children with the subliminal impression that women can make films. Also, in the film, it shows a progression in Nadia's coping with the crew and reveals another side of her personality.

Anne Henderson (an NFB editor) says it's fantastic to edit for you because you are one of the few people who has a film sense and when you choose things, you choose them in terms of how they're going to look on film. Some filmmakers don't care.

They're very heady, intellectual. I see the film in my mind. In the film Anne edited (**Benoit**) there is a dodgeball game. I filmed that scene to introduce the whole family. I told the cameraman to hold on each person long enough for a voice-over introduction on every person there. That's all I needed from that scene. I give the editors pretty well-structured material.

Do you have a formula for the Children of Canada series?

Yes, they are formula and that's why I'm getting tired of them. I found a formula that really works and so I could do variations but I need to do other things.

Do you think Canada is a better place to be than the States for you?

Is it better to be a big fish in a little pond or a little fish in a big pond?

Do you feel loyalty for Canada?

I do. I do. But I feel that I want to learn in the States. They know it better... if you like my films it's because of my experience in the States. If you get trained in a TV station you work efficiently and faster. And you're not horrified when someone imposes some kind of limitation on you because you're used to it and you don't make a big deal about your artistic integrity. You do a job.

What did you do at WGBH specifically? Did you direct?

I worked on all sorts of programs there and learned both television and film. I was always an assistant, either an associate producer/researcher or a production assistant. Of all the people at the TV station I floated the most. I worked on quite a lot of programs. I worked there for five years but while working there, I submitted the proposal to the Film Board for the children's series. The key is not to look for a job but to sell an idea. An idea is outside me and if it is rejected, it isn't me being rejected. I am not the kind of person to say that the films are fantastic but the idea is, I think, the most fantastic idea, isn't it? To make films about children narrated by children so that Canadian children can learn about other Canadian children is the most brilliant idea.

It's also very simple.

Yes. Anyway, a lot of people did not see the merit of the idea. It sort of languished. I was treated politely all the time. I would call up and finally I sent three excellent Zoom films. On one of my visits I was told there might be a women's studio opening and if that happened they would just hand on the proposal. Then, three months later, it was established and I called Kathleen (Shannon, head of Studio D) and she said to come to Montreal. I went to the Film Board and I showed the films and there was just fire in their eyes. In February I took a leave from Boston and came to Montreal and researched and shot the two pilot films. Then I went back to Boston; eight or nine months passed and then Kathleen said, "I can't guarantee you forever but I think you should come." So I moved back. I've made six films since.

IF YOU'RE DYING TO KNOW...

What do your parents think of the Award?

They're really proud. My mother wants me to bring the films home to show to her Hadassah club. But I won't. I know what she has in mind – maybe one of them will have a son.

Where do you buy your clothes?

I don't buy very many but I needed a whole new wardrobe for Hollywood so I went to factories. You know how it works with factories. You have to know someone who knows someone. I was on TV a couple of times and it would have been a horror show to go and buy an outfit every time. So now I can handle any kind of social occasion at the drop of a hat. I have the respectable clothes for it.

Do you think you have a particular philosophy of life that comes out in your films?

I wouldn't call myself a nonconformist because I'm not eccentric but I have never conformed to the norm in terms of my attitudes. I'm Jewish and that's been part of my identity. Most of my friends don't have that strong an identity and it sets me apart a little in my outlook.

Do you have brothers and sisters?

I have three sisters. I'm number three.

Were you the odd one out in your family?

I was the sick one, the physically sick one. Not very sick but I had terrible allergies and was hospitalized; that's how severe they were. That made me a little bit different, being the sick kid.

Are you quite religious?

Not that religious, but I'm kosher, for example, which is not the norm. There aren't too many kosher filmmakers. I have a little bit of familiarity with being different, not very different, just a little bit and knowing that it's not a big deal.

Are you a Zionist?

Yes. I was one of the people who booed Vanessa Redgrave.

Did other people realize you were booing her and turn around and look at you?

I wasn't the first person. When she started talking there was initially a gasp from the audience and then people started booing and I was one of them.

Do you think that because you work so hard that you end up not being interested in material things?

I don't work that hard. Really. I'm productive but the secret is I'm not editing. Editing really gets you down. So I work hard for two or three weeks and then I don't work hard and then I work hard. So I cannot say I work hard.

Do you watch a lot of films?

Quite a bit. I never was a film nut. I just happened into film because I thought it would be fun. But really – and I'm not being excessively humble – just because I won an Oscar doesn't mean that I'm a great filmmaker. It was a nice little film that happened to touch people and, thank God, the NFB had the judgement to submit it to the Academy. The only thing, I feel that sets these films apart from some other children's films is that these films are not condescending. They deal with the kid as a person. I don't really consider myself an authority on children. I know pretty well how to make a good portrait film of a kid and probably of an adult too.

What was it like to go from Beverly Shaffer, filmmaker, and to walk through the doors of the Film Board with your new label?

So far everyone that has congratulated me has done it so genuinely. I have been made to feel that people are happy I won the Award. But I was cautioned first of all by a friend who has some experience in life and he said, 'Beverly, be careful. People are going to be jealous.'

At the Film Board they had a party and I was surprised at the way it was organized because they had a little stage and we were presented as celebrities. None of us wanted to go on stage but we were pulled up and had to stand there. It was terribly embarrassing.

In the outside world, it's the director's film but at the Film Board, they know it's not that way. I've been at the Board two and a half years, and there were people like Mike Rubbo and Donald Brittain standing there... I feel very lucky that this film won, but it's ironic and crazy.

Even if documentary is the filmmaker's creation, everything comes from what is real. That is its advantage over drama.

Yes. For example, I know that if I had been making a film about a crippled kid that was a drama, it wouldn't have been as good as Nadia because what could be better than the truth and the real. But it may be different for historical films. I think it's important right now to learn more about unions. I'm hoping that I have an uncanny ability to come up with a

good idea at the right time. You see, often the true genius comes up with an idea too far ahead of his time. What I hope is that I can just come up with it at the right time.

It sounds like you're efficient enough so that if you get an idea at the right time, it'll be done while the right time is still in existence.

I don't know if that is true about myself but I hope it is because that makes successful films.

Do you think you would have accomplished what you have right now had you stayed in Boston?

No. If I had stayed in Boston they would never have made me a director. It's unfortunate that whatever level you enter an institution at it determines your future. I was lucky enough to enter here as a director. If I hadn't, I never would have gotten my chance.

Do you think the women's unit (at NFB) offers women this chance?

Absolutely. I think Kathleen Shannon put herself on the line. It was one of the first projects she approached the program committee with for approval and she must have said "If you have faith in me, you have to trust my judgement." So they said OK. And I think the women's unit is going to attract more and more people now. Somehow it is a little bit more comforable, not so high-powered. There aren't only women in it now, there are some men too.

For me the Film Board has given me the chance to make the films I want. There's nowhere else in the world like it. At that TV station you couldn't make any film you wanted to make. But here, with the right circumstances, you get an idea and you can make the film. And you can make it as long as you want it and you can finish it more or less when it's ready to be finished.

That whole film (**I'll Find A Way**) was shot in five days and it was quite a low budget film. I know exactly how to make these children's films in the most efficient manner and I think I could teach people. But if you're making a film about kids or with kids you really should be enthusiastic and you can't be enthusiastic for a lifetime. So it's better to leave it and come back when you feel like it.

Now I'd rather do dramatic films for adults; I'm going also to be working on the Commonwealth Games, which is a challenge.

What's your role?

Paul Cowan is the director and he has four directors working with him and I'm one of them. Here we'll see if, in fact, the female sensibility is different from that of the male. I'm the only woman director and I'm going to be following one or two athletes.

So you have a suspicion that it is different, that sensibility?

I think so, although a lot of people get angry when you tell them that, especially men. Women are more interested in feelings. That's why Nadia's such a good film, because she talks about feelings and she talks about what hurts her. I think that if more women start making films, the films will be different. I know there have been excellent films made at the Film Board that tell you everything about a situation but they don't have that feeling, they don't touch as much. For me, that's what makes a good film, a film that deals with emotions and can touch you.

Did you ever think of winning an Academy Award?

Never. Would you think of an Academy Award? I have a healthy fantasy life and everything, but that was never a part of it.

Once you've done that, what is the next?...

The next is... well now it's a part of my fantasy. I'd like to win another one. □

I'll Find a Way

d: Beverly Shaffer, **ph:** Hideaki Kobayashi, **asst. ph:** Joan Hutton, **ed:** Ginny Stikeman, **re-rec:** Jean-Pierre Joutel, **sd. ed.:** John Knight, **sd. rec.:** Ingrid M. Cusiel, **m:** Larry Crosley, **Administration:** Jane Kenderes, **exec. p.:** Kathleen Shannon, **p:** Yuki Yoshida, **p.c.:** National Film Board (1977) **col:** 16mm, **running time:** 23 minutes, 20 seconds.

Nadia with her parents.

Academy Awards for documentaries and short films are just as unrelated to actual merit as in the other more prestigious categories, so it's absurd to talk about whether Beverly Shaffer's **I'll Find A Way** really deserves the Oscar it has just received. It's embarrassing the way the NFB publicity people have reacted to this latest accident of Beverly Hills politics with such unprecedented hype, and have made 10-year-old Nadia di Franco the hottest new Canadian media star since Craig Russell.

Fortunately for all concerned, however, the Oscar couldn't have happened to a nicer film.

I suppose it's being a poor sport to interrupt the celebration by pointing out the unerring stupidity with which the Academy has systematically ignored for the last thirty-six years the best documentaries from the best documentary studio in the world. The last and only NFB documentary ever

to be so honored was **Churchill's Island** from the "World in Action" series during the early years of World War II; the most recent Oscar given a "Canadian" documentary not produced at the Board (**The Man Who Skied Down Everest**, that inept trim-bin epic from a couple of years back) only made things worse.

But let's look at the new Oscar in a positive light and see it as more than a pat-on-the-back for Shaffer and her fine series of films for and about Canadian children, or even for the indomitable women of Studio D (the Women's Studio that doesn't like to be called that anymore) who struggled to find a way through the bureaucracy for Shaffer to make her films. Let's also see the Oscar as the belated recognition of the work of all the Terence Macartney-Filgates and the Michel Braults who, over the last forty years, have built up that NFB tradition of excellence of which **I'll Find A Way** is simply the latest expression.

But to return to Nadia, how can you go wrong with a brave, cheerful little girl in a wheelchair? Well, it's very easy, and Shaffer is to be commended for avoiding all of the pitfalls of mawkishness and mush inherent in the subject. This little film has just enough delicacy, restraint, and intelligence to keep you from hating yourself for falling for it head over heels. The probable reason the film is able to avoid the Baby Seal Syndrome is that its emotional appeal comes not from any heavy-handed sentimentalizing on the part of the director, who keeps visual rhetoric to a minimum, but from Nadia herself, who serves as off-screen and on-screen narrator for the film.

It is clear that Shaffer chose her star with great care. It is through Nadia's tough, un-self-pitying perspective that we see her world and this perspective is respected scrupulously by Shaffer and her crew. Nadia refuses to let us feel sorry for her any more than she herself does; she guides us around her environment with both spunk and humor as well as with the self-conscious formality we might expect of a little girl confronted with an eight-legged sync sound unit. A natural ham, Nadia also has the maturity to treat her job of revealing her world to us with the utmost gravity. She asks nothing of us in return but to "act normal" in front of handicapped children and to install ramps in buildings, but the moral investment she elicits at the same time is a very heavy one indeed.

So far I've used words like "restraint" and "respect" in referring to the film and, of course, these rather vague attributes are rooted in structural principles. Echoing Nadia's own self-consciousness of her role, the film is also very much aware of its own position, halfway between Nadia and the spectator. Nadia's interaction with the camera, the crew, and the spectator, becomes as much a subject of the film as Nadia's life itself. I'm not speaking only of the unpretentiously Brechtian shots at the outset which show Nadia talking over her part with the crew and the multiple takes of her opening lines which follow, clapper and all, but of the self-reflecive tone which pervades the entire film – in the self-serious voice on the sound-track illuminating the events as they unfold, of the flirtatious gleams occasionally flashed our way during scenes of otherwise great sobriety.

The show-stopping smile: Nadia.

The added dimensions which this tone brings to the film confirm, once and for all, how mannered and artificial the "naturalistic" children of the Anglo-saxon cinéma-vérité of the sixties really were; in Allan King's **Warrendale**, for example, where there's the constant pretense that the camera really isn't there.

As far as antecedents go, **I'll Find A Way** is much less reminiscent of **Warrendale** than of that other Oscar-winner of twenty-four years ago, Lindsay Anderson's **Thursday's Children.** That film's very similar sense of distance is, of course, more the result of the awkwardness of the cinéma-vérité technology at that very early stage than of any aesthetic decision in itself, but the effect is quite the same. Anderson's pioneering study of deaf-mute children learning to communicate owes its continuing power, not to the intensities of catharsis and forced intimacy as in **Warrendale**, but to a kind of self-reflective formality encouraged by the classroom context of the film.

In both films, it is possible to observe with detachment the particular mechanics of the teacher-pupil relationships, and the special complex of familiar "normalcy" and impenetrable otherness, marginality, which makes such children ideal subjects for the non-fiction cinema. Anderson's children were younger than Shaffer's so that his teachers are much closer to the centre of his film: with Shaffer, the hardworking young women who are usually visible in the background have a much more peripheral role, functioning more as resource-people, skilfully encouraging rather than insisting upon the astonishing initiative and independence which Nadia delights in showing off for the camera.

Children can tell when they're being respected and it's no wonder that they love this film. Adults are very fond of it also, but for them, certainly for me, there is the added level of two nagging, unstated questions suggested by the film. First, how is it that society cannot afford to give all its children, "normal" or otherwise, the opportunity to develop Nadia's unusual self-reliance and maturity, in a learning environment like the film's Sunnyview School where the teacher-student ratio seems nothing short of luxurious? And secondly, more darkly, will our society continue to provide Nadia with this chance to blossom so prodigiously as she moves into her adult years? Or is the single glimmer of pain which Nadia suppresses when she talks about the times she "feels bad" more representative of her future than the overstated enthusiasm with which this remarkable little film is otherwise filled to overflowing?

Thomas Waugh

Thomas Waugh is a professor of documentary film at Concordia University.

a vote of thanks

The scenario has run itself out and Michael Spencer will step down on May 31 as the executive director of the Canadian Film Development Corporation. If one sometimes felt ambivalent about the way he did his job, there was always respect for the person, Michael Spencer. Peter Pearson captures these feelings in his tribute.

by Peter Pearson

The Winnipeg days: Kirwan Cox, Tom Shandel, Michael Spencer, Linda Beath, André Lamy, Sandra Gathercole, Len Klady.

Michael Spencer is going to have to cough up his own story, before any accurate appraisal of him and his contribution to Canadian film history can be made.

So much of what he is, and has done, remains cloaked behind that affable, gracious exterior. He has always been the very model of a modern major general. Too discreet.

Once, in Winnipeg, during those mid-winter, mid-Seventies gatherings, he lamely offered that he was fully behind proposals for a quota and levy. Some wag piped up from the audience, "Yes, ten years behind."

Certainly he has been a lightening rod for criticism. Everybody's had a go at Spencer and the Film Development Corporation: Budge Crawley's fulminations, Sandra Gathercole's End-of-the-World invocations, that tag-team of Canadian good taste, Knelman-Fulford's lamentations.

For ten years, he's drawn much of the fire, like a good-natured school teacher, sitting above a dunking stool at the neighborhood fair. From Vancouver to the Gaspé, he's sat in on hand-wringing sessions about the future of the Canadian film industry, bearing the brunt of many an attack. And offering in return a polished say-nothing in his bureaucratese that even a Delphic oracle would have a hard time deciphering.

And yet, it's probably worth flashing back ten years, to the days when CBC-NFB had all the bats and balls, and would not let anybody else play. To say that Canada had a moribund film industry was probably overstating the case. There were four possibilities: the Board, television, Hollywood or London.

Somebody must be given some credit for the distance we have travelled these past ten years. Certainly, no agency – other than the CFDC – has moved us forward. The National Film Board, that beached whale of an institution, still seems marooned somewhere in 1946. The CBC, despite announced intentions with each licence renewal, has offered primarily lip-service to its obligations.

And yet, there are now major tax advantages, co-production agreements, definitions of 'Canadian film', immigration restrictions, and on and on. It is now possible for some to exist as independent filmmakers.

Michael Spencer has been at the centre of each of those initiatives. They would not have gone forward without his support and backing. We now have a feature industry that spends over $20 million, a commercial and industrial film section that is viable on its own terms, and an emerging television capacity, in both the private and public sectors.

Meanwhile, it's been a ten-year industry-wide objective to sort out Spencer's head for him. We all know, for example, that he had been chugging up to Ottawa through five Secretaries of State – Lamontagne, Lamarsh, Pelletier, Faulkner and now Roberts – whispering his 'on-the-one-hand, on-the-other-hands' into their ears. The exercise has been for everyone to put his or her words into Spencer's whispers.

To this day, no one is really sure that Spencer has heard, or passed on any of the messages. And yet... there's Millard Roth at the Festival of Festivals, muttering quietly away with Spencer: here's Perlmutter at Banff in private confab... Everyone graciously received.

Sifting through the entrails – the CFDC's Annual Report – one can scarcely discern any digestion of these thought-manipulations. If the annual report is meant to influence government, it's certainly the bland leading the bland.

Peter Pearson is past-president of the Directors Guild of Canada and of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers.

With inflation, the CFDC budget is now about one-half of what it was in 1968. Consider, for example, that the National Film Board's budget for *this year* is greater than the total budget of the CFDC's ten year history.

But then consider what the CFDC, eroded budget and all, has achieved. My own ten favorite films the CFDC has participated in are: (in no particular order) **Kamouraska, Lies My Father Told Me, Les Ordres, Goin' Down the Road, Married Couple, Deux Femmes en Or, Rowdyman, Réjeanne Padovanni, Duddy Kravitz**..... and maybe even, **Paperback Hero.**

Now try and name ten Film Board titles – any ten. That little exercise illustrates as clearly as any the degree of evolution we have experienced. We now have a history, several notable achievements behind us, and even the frail hope for a future.

For better or for worse, we have also bust that confining mould of Canadian 'good taste'. Over the ten years, we've had our crop of skin flicks, horror films, and, on occasions, tough political dramas – films that scarcely existed before the CFDC. It's given impetus to such diverse careers as Claude Fournier, David Cronenberg and Denys Arcand. None of these filmmakers would have evolved without the CFDC's presence.

One of the remarkable documents of Canadian film history is the Hansard of the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Film, and Assistance to the Arts, the day Michael Spencer doubletalks benumbed MPs about why the government is investing in pornography, to their considerable displeasure.

But then, displeasure with the CFDC and Spencer has been an endemic condition of the past ten years. In part, it reflects the Canadian Wrangle: East vs. West, French vs. English, nationalist vs. continentalist – this contumacious bicker that's miring us all in the debate over the future of the country. Our degree of frustration with Spencer probably is an accurate litmus test of our dissatisfaction with the country.

Like our political leaders, he has often been accused of being completely devoid of vision. He once said, "I like the job. If only I didn't have to look at the films." Certainly he has contributed to some of the most unwatchable films ever made in this country.

But beyond that, he has also contributed to our force-fed evolution. He husbanded limited resources, and, on the whole, spent them wisely. He participated in the debate, and encouraged it forward. He was accessible to all and beholden to none.

As an industry we now have confidence in our ability to produce, direct, distribute and exhibit films that will attract a public, make a buck, reflect a nation, and stimulate an audience. All without those dreaded stepmothers, the CBC and the NFB. It wasn't like that ten years ago.

To Michael Spencer, we all owe a significant vote of thanks. He stood and weathered the storms, kept the doors open and the dialogues possible, allowed the difficult films to be made and pushed that they be seen.

Now, it's his turn to fess up. Ninety percent of his life has been behind closed doors. He should let us in on his life as a magazine loader for Budge Crawley, as head of security at the Film Board, as ongoing dauphin to Secretaries of State. He's probably too discreet to tell what happened when John Roberts went into cabinet with a lion of a film policy, and emerged with kitty litter. But he has a yarn to tell. And we're all interested.

A gracious man, he has served us all honorably. □

the industry's first reaction

In a rare manifestation of solidarity, the industry reacted quickly to Mr. Roberts' handling of the replacement of Michael Spencer by Michael McCabe. If **Cinema Canada** has decided to print the following telegrams, it is not so much for what they reveal about Mr. Spencer as what they reveal about the relationships between the Secretary of State and the members of the industry. Mr. McCabe will have some fences to mend: fences which were built for him by Mr. Roberts. The final telegram reprinted is Mr. Roberts' response to the ones which preceed it.

The Association des Distributeurs de Films du Quebec has learned with regret that you have decided to relieve Michael Spencer of his duties as Executive Director of the CFDC.

We would like to point out that Mr. Spencer has carried out his job with great competence, diplomacy and dynamism, and has earned the respect of all who work in this complicated film industry.

We have also learned with stupefaction that you have officiously chosen to replace him without having consulted the film community or the related professional associations.

We feel that this unfortunate decision will have grave consequences on the development of the film industry. If you insist on relieving Mr. Spencer of his duties, it is essential that the film community be consulted regarding the choice of his successor. It is also important that this person be totally familiar with this industry if we don't want to be set back by several months, or even, years. We request that you immediately postpone your decision, so that we might discuss this matter with you and avoid, once again, dealing a hard blow to our industry.

Association des Distributeurs
de Films du Quebec
André Link, President
Pierre David, Vice-President

We the members of the Association of Independent and Canadian Owned Motion Picture Distributers were both shocked and disappointed to learn from the Press that you have designated a new candidate for the position of Executive Director of the Canadian Film Development Corporation.

As wholly owned Canadian companies, we feel that our association, along with other key professional organizations, should have been consulted in any major changes affecting our segment of the motion picture industry.

This would be consistent with your conversations with us on several occasions, that consultations would take place with our association and others, for feedback purposes to any major changes.

Hoping this is not your final decision, we make ourselves available to you for further input concerning this important matter.

Association of Independent and Canadian Owned Motion Picture Distributors

I am sorry to have missed the opportunity of seeing you Wednesday in Ottawa. I wanted to convey to you the stupefaction of our members concerning the newspaper reports about the replacement of Mr. Michael Spencer.

It is surprising that just when Mr. Gratien Gélinas leaves and will be replaced by a newcomer about whom there has not yet been an official announcement, another apparently political choice is made. It would seem normal that, during a transitionary phase, one would give him a chance to become familiar with the job and to prove himself. Mr Spencer and his team would be an essential aid during such a transition. The filming milieu is also reacting strongly to the fact that it was not consulted as had been the case when Mr. Spencer was nominated to his position. It is not necessary to remind you how completely the milieu supports Mr. Spencer and the work he has accomplished over the last 10 years. It has permitted the Canadian film industry to develop itself considerably, and has permitted numerous québéçois filmmakers to make some very important films.

I and other members of the milieu are at your disposal to acquaint you at greater length with our position.

Denis Héroux, President
L'Association des producteurs
de films du Québec

The ARFQ wishes to publicly state that the recent nominations to the position of President and Executive Director of the CFDC and the manner in which they were held, confirm in a grotesque manner the mercantile and scornful attitude of the Federal Government towards Canadian cinema.

These nominations were made without any form of consultation, and indicate that Ottawa is yielding to the pressures of particular financial interests instead of concerning itself with the interests of the nation and its culture.

The visit between Mr. Jack Valenti, President of the Motion Picture Association of America and Mr. John Roberts, Secretary of State, as well as the recent meetings in Banff where numerous agreements were concluded between the American film industry and purely speculative Canadian interests, had a real and immediate impact. Yet, nearly 15 years of struggle and demands on the part of the Canadian film community have not succeeded in overcoming the indolence, the indifference and the servile attitude of the Secretary of State.

This strictly commercial orientation which Ottawa proposes for its film policy is, in fact, confirmed by the permissive and quasi fradulent "tax shelter" (income tax evasion) which is just as American as it is Canadian. Moreover, it is relevant to note that it is during the reign of John Turner, then Minister of Finance and since become the

president of a film investment company, that this much abused "tax shelter" originated.

Therefore, once again, the ARFQ deplores the impotence of the Secretary of State in establishing a real film policy and denounces the auctioning-off of a national culture which is not only left unprotected, but literally placed in the hands of the basest speculative interests.

It is for this reason that the ARFQ recently withdrew from the consultative committee of the Canadian Film Development Corporation.

The Executive Committee
Association des Réalisateurs
de Films du Quebec

The Canadian Association of Motion Picture Producers wishes to convey to you its extreme concern regarding the abrupt replacement of Michael Spencer as Executive Director of the Canadian Film Devlopment Corporation. During the last few years which have seen the enormous growth of the Canadian film industry, we have evolved from a small, untried and inexperienced group into a maturing, internationally recognized and applauded industry. Mr. Spencer has been an invaluable bulwark and cohort in that growth. While we have all had our reasons for criticizing the operations of the CFDC and perhaps even Mr. Spencer from time to time, our Association unanimously endorses the confidence which Mr. Spencer has earned, not only from the Canadian industry but from the rest of the world.

While we understand that Mr. Spencer had expressed his willingness to retire at the end of the first ten years of the CFDC's existence in conjunction with the appointment of a new chairman, we also understand that Mr. Spencer was prepared to stay on in some consultative capacity in order to ensure a smooth transition in the management changeover.

We are not aware of any organized research having been done by your department or any other bodies within the government in connection with the selection of a replacement for Mr. Spencer nor are we aware of any consultative process having taken place, either with the members of the CFDC or the leaders of the various component groups in the Canadian film industry in connection with this major decision.

Mr. Minister, we are appalled at the manner in which the decision on Mr. Spencer's replacement was made and the manner in which, it would appear, Mr. Spencer has personally been treated in these circumstances.

At a time when the Canadian film industry is achieving new levels of success, both artistically and commercially, a change in the management of the CFDC is of critical importance and one which we would have thought would have been considered only after exhaustive consultation.

None of us has envied Mr. Spencers' responsibility in attempting to walk the fine line of policy responsibility to your department and financial responsibility to the funding sources within the federal government. We feel that he has fulfilled this delicate position better than anyone else would have been able to succeed in doing.

Mr. Minister, we implore you to reconsider the basis upon which this decision of Mr. Spencer's replacement has been taken. While we cannot judge the effectiveness or capacity of his replacement and are in no way detracting from that individual's potential ability to fulfill the role as executive director, we urgently suggest that some means be found to retain Mr. Spencer in some significant role within the CFDC in order that that organization as well as the Canadian industry itself not lose the vast experience and confidence which he has been able to attain.

Respectfully,

Canadian Association of Motion
Picture Producers
David M. Perlmutter, President

At the March 15 meeting of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers Executive Committee, I was asked to convey to you our members' concern with the manner in which the transition between Executive Directors of the CFDC has been handled by your Department.

Without commenting on the qualifications of either Mr. McCabe or Mr. Spencer we would like to point out that this matter was dealt with in an arbitrary and abrupt manner, inappropriate to the many years of Mr. Spencer's service to the film industry. It was also accomplished without consultation in the industry and, as far as we know, without awaiting the recommendation of the CFDC Board.

Our organization is also concerned by the fact that both the new Chairman and the new Executive Director of the CFDC have been chosen from outside the industry, and have little, if any, experience in the film industry.

Kirwan Cox
Chairman
Council of Canadian Filmmakers

We were surprised to learn through the press of the replacement of Mr. Michael Spencer as Executive Director of the Canadian Film Development Corporation by a nominee with no background whatever within the film industry.

We are surprised and disappointed that Mr. Spencer, who has served the industry all these years, learned of his replacement through the press, and we are discouraged that you did not see fit to consult the industry representatives on the matter of selecting an appropriate replacement.

We trust that there will be no confirmation of the changes until the necessary steps have been taken to consult the industry.

Harry Gulkin & Claude Heroux
Film Producers

Thank you for your recent telegram concerning the appointment of a successor to Michael Spencer. I regret very much the speculation in the press that a successor to him has been chosen. These stories are misleading.

The federal government has appointed Michel Vennat as the Chairman of the CFDC. However, no final decision has yet been made concerning the position of executive director. The appointment of a new executive director can only follow a recommendation of the members of commendation of the members of the CFDC. I shall be meeting with the members of the CFDC in the near future to seek their advice in this matter.

I regret any embarrassment caused to Michael Spencer by the recent press stories. I share your high regard for the contribution to Canadian films which he has made over the last ten years.

John Roberts
Secretary of State

BOOK REVIEWS

Canadian Film Reader,
edited by Seth Feldman
and Joyce Nelson
Peter Martin Associates, 405 pages. $6.95

Several years ago I knew five or six people who were writing books on Canadian film. The future prospects then for the teaching and study of Canadian film seemed auspicious. At last there would be a critical mass of easily accessible materials. But, as with the best laid plans of mice and writers, most of the plans went astray and few of the books actually appeared in print. The result is that there is still a paucity of written materials (especially in English) on the Canadian film. There are, of course, the articles and reviews in *Cinema Canada* and *Motion* and the occasional piece on Canada in *Take One,* but in-depth, critical studies of particular films, movements, or personages are rare in book form. In the past, people teaching a course on Canadian film have literally had to scrounge for sufficient written materials to use.

Seth Feldman and Joyce Nelson's *Canadian Film Reader* does much to rectify the situation. The anthology is comprised of 44 articles and reviews, many of which were originally published in such diverse journals as *Cinema Canada, Descant, Take one, Saturday Night, Film Quarterly, Canadian Forum* and *This Magazine*. Included are three pieces which seem to have been written especially for the volume, one transcript of a speech, a portion of a yet unpublished manuscript, and three excerpts from books. In quality, the selections run the gamut from unreadable academese to throw-away journalism. The vast majority of the articles, however, are readable, worthwhile, and significant.

As in any collection of this size, gaps are inevitable. As Feldman and Nelson point out in their introduction, the book has:

> ... "more material dealing with the 'Establishment' cinema than with 'Independent' cinema; a stress on English-Canadian films rather than Francophone works; maybe even too much 'factual' material and not enough critical-theoretical works."

The editors hope, however, that their book will stimulate others to respond to the articles, that

> "There will be new research, new writing, new courses, lectures, conferences and retrospectives on the Canadian films discussed here, as well as those that have gone unmentioned."

Overly optimistic, perhaps but there is no doubt that the need exits.

Feldman and Nelson divide the book into five parts. Part One, "The Possibilities Are Truly Great", consists of five articles dealing with the pre-war years of Canadian film. Memorable in this section is the article by Peter Morris on Ernest Shipman. The story of Shipman's success in producing seven feature films in Canada in three years, followed by his rapid demise in the early twenties, is a fascinating case study of an early huckster and entrepreneur who was outhuckstered by the "growth" and "progress" of the film industry in the U.S.

Predictably, the second section of this anthology centres on the National Film Board. Of particular interest here are Barbara Halpern Martineau's study of women's films at the NFB during World War II and Ronald Blumer and Susan Schouten's piece on the overly neglected documentarist Donald Brittain. This section ends with John Grierson's "Memo to Michelle about Decentralizing the Means of Production", reminding us how forward looking and astute Grierson was, even toward the end of his life.

Section three, the longest, deals with Feature Filmmaking and is highlighted by Bob Fothergill's theoretical piece, "Coward, Bully, or Clown". In it he cleverly extends to film the theory popularized by Margaret Atwood (in *Survival*) on the depiction of the Canadian ego in literature.

In-depth interviews with filmmakers can be particularly valuable in a work such as this as a way of coming to grips with realistic, personal, and practical issues and problems. The interview by Sarah Jennings of Terence Macartney-Filgate that appears in section two and the interview of Denys Arcand by Judy Wright and Debbie Magidson in section three are both works with which I had been familiar, but which, till now, had been relatively inaccessible. Alan Rosenthal's interview with Allan King on *A Married Couple* appears here, but unfortunately is not accompanied by the useful companion interviews with Richard Leiterman and Arla Saare or by the budgets and "Notes Made from Inspection of Footage", all of which appear in Rosenthal's own book of interviews with documentary filmmakers.

Section four, "Experimental Filmmaking", is disappointingly brief, containing only six pieces, with articles on Joyce Wieland and Michael Snow taking up half of them. Joe Medjuck's interview with Michael Snow, in addition to being readable and enjoyable, has a 'down home' quality and a lack of pretentiousness. This interview, as well as many of the other pieces, is updated with a postscript written in 1976.

The final section of the book, "The Possibilities Are Truly Great' Continued" contains Peter Harcourt's "Introduction" from *Film Canadiana 1975-1976.* As the final piece in the book, the irony of its title is not lost. For what it, and one other piece in the final section do, is to question the future of Canadian film. Both Harcourt and Sandra Gathercole, in her "Statements from the Council of Canadian Filmmakers", look to government for solutions to the problems.

Despite the fact that there are no easy answers to the myriad difficulties facing the Canadian film industry, the times are encouraging. And that encouragement is fostered and strengthened by the publication of Seth Feldman's and Joyce Nelson's *Canadian Film Reader.*

John Stuart Katz

John Stuart Katz is Chairman of the Film Department at York University. His published works include Perspectives on the study of film (1971) and A Curriculum in Film (1972).

BOOK REVIEWS

HAYWIRE
by Brooke Hayward
Non-Fiction, Bantam, 384 Pages, $2.50.

Her mother was Margaret Sullavan, the beautiful, throaty-voiced star of Hollywood and Broadway. Her father was Leland Hayward, the most colorful and dynamic of theatrical agents. She was the eldest of their three children, raised in a glittering world of glamor, beauty, talent and privilege during the golden years of Hollywood. But it was a world that would inevitably be shattered by destroyed marriages, mental breakdowns and tragic death.

Haywire is Brooke Hayward's grippingly honest memoir of her extraordinary family, their magical life, and the recklessness, guilts and emotional extravagance that so tragically destroyed that magic forever.

Haywire, which takes its title from Leland Hayward's cable address and the emotional outcome of the family, is more than the usual "showbiz" biography; it is the moving story of a unique American family and its failure.

Margaret Sullavan was a superb actress, a spell-casting charmer, beautiful and spirited. "If ever I've known someone who was unique, it was Maggie", said Henry Fonda.

Leland Hayward was known as "the Toscanini of the telephone", making deals day and night for his clients – Garbo, Hemingway, Judy Garland, Billy Wilder, Gregory Peck, Myrna Loy, Gene Kelly, Boris Karloff, Charles Laughton, Lillian Hellman, Dashiell Hammett, Fred Astaire and a dozen others.

And the children – Bridget, and exquisite beauty: Bill, inventive and adventurous; and Brooke, a "Life" cover girl at age 15. They were attractive, intelligent and adored, living out the romance of their parent's lives.

Then, after a 10-year marriage, mother and dad separate and divorce. Bill is in and out of Menniger's, takes to smuggling cocaine, living off stolen credit cards, and goes to jail. Bridget dies at 21 – a probable suicide. Maggie dies – a probable suicide. Dad dies, a lingering, heartbreaking death that he almost literally worked himself to. And Brooke would go through two divorces and years of questioning and self-doubt.

What went wrong? What *was* wrong?

To answer these questions, Brooke Hayward reconstructs her past and her family's, taking us into their fascinating lives during the halcyon days of Hollywood and Broadway, revealing the disparity between their outer and inner circumstances.

As counterpoint to her absorbing narrative, those who knew and loved the Haywards – including the Fondas, Jimmy Stewart, the Mankiewiczes, Diana Vreeland, Truman Capote and Josh Logan – give their own, personally-told memories.

John Wolotko

John Wolotko is working on a Masters degree in film from New York University, and is a regular contributor to Trade News North.

letter from the editor

Where's my magazine?

We've had calls and letters. In the last months, they've gotten increasingly insistant, sounding frustrated, disappointed or downright angry. They all ask the same question, "Why can't I get my Cinema Canada on time?"

We don't know. Unless the Canadian postal service has decided to force Canadian editors under by simply not delivering our magazines.

It took a York professor seven weeks to get issue no. 44. It took all of Toronto three weeks to get issue no. 45. The horror stories go on and on.

We've called the post office. We've written. Last month, the excuse we got was that, with the increase of postal rates, everyone and his uncle mailed at the end of March and the system was overloaded. The month before, they told us that we had gotten the magazine into the post office too early. (The logic is, you see, that the first one into the depot ends up on the bottom of the pile by the end of the day and is, consequently, the last one out. It says something about this situation in the New Testament.) The month before, they were clearing away the Christmas mail, and on and on and on...

All the members of the Canadian Periodical Publishing Association, (the publishing industry's answer to the CCFM) have the same complaints and are trying to resolve the problems with the post office. It is still a mystery that Time magazine is never delivered late.

Meanwhile, there's little we can do. Our addressing system is mechanized. It takes us two days from the moment we receive the magazine from the printer to get it into the mails. Normally, it should take less than a week to get it to the subscribers via second class mail.

There seems to be no ready solution, unless subscribers want to pay the additional cost to receive the magazine by first class delivery. The prices are available in an ad on this page.

For those of you who still have faith, you might try writing a letter. Not to us. To the Postmaster General.

Go first-class

Every subscription to **Cinema Canada** includes a free subscription to **Trade News North**. The two magazines are now published at different times during the month, and are mailed separately.

If you wish to receive your sub by first-class mail, all you have to do is to send us the cost of the postage. Unfortunately, the mail has joined cigarettes and alcohol as a luxury item; the cost to us of the mailing is $.70 per issue or $7.00 per sub annually.

The issue with which your sub expires is printed in the upper right hand corner of your mailing label. Send us $.70 per remaining issue in your subscription and we'll upgrade your sub immediately to first-class status.

Then cross your fingers.

Mail check to Cinema Canada, Box 398, Outremont Station, Montreal H2V 4N3

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As part of this promotion, Kodak had a film produced on behalf of the motion picture industry about making corporate films and we will be showing it to as many business people and groups as possible.

This production "Film is Good Business" is available to film producers at nominal cost. To arrange a complimentary screening, contact your local Kodak Technical Sales Representative or write Kodak Canada Ltd. for more information.

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David Main
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Frank Moore and Andree Pelletier – "The Third Walker"
Nehemiah Persoff and Dawn Greenhalgh and Dwayne McLean – "Deadly Harvest"
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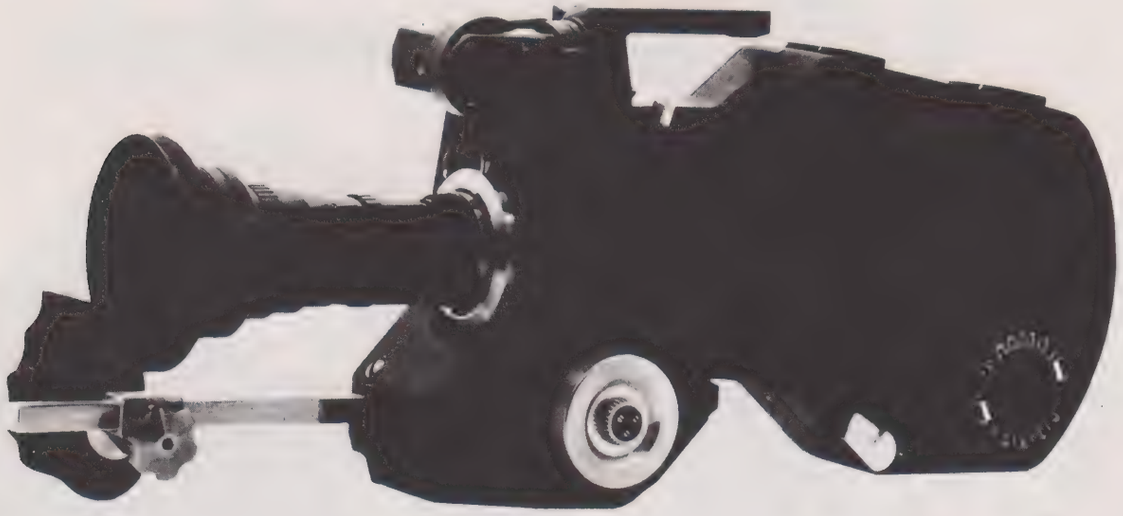

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FILM REVIEWS

Donald Brittain's THE CHAMPIONS

d: Donald Brittain, **sc:** Donald Brittain, **ph:** Andreas Poulsson, **ed:** Steven Kellar, Ted Remerowski, **sd: mix:** Michel Descombes, Jean-Pierre Joutel, **sd. ed.** Bernard Bordeleau, **sd. rec.** Claude Hazanavicius, **exec. p.** Peter Katadotis, **p:** Donald Brittain (NFB), Janet Leissner (CBC), **p.c.** National Film Board/ Canadian Broadcasting Corp., **col:** 16mm, **dist:** NFB, Television Distribution only, CBC, **narr:** Donald Brittain, **running time:** 2x60 minutes, **year:** 1978.

Lévesque interviewing other champions

"Politicians should be like Trappists in monasteries. The only words they are permitted to say to each other are 'brother, one day we must die."

Pierre Trudeau in **The Champions**

If anyone has any questions about the differences between television and film, **The Champions** provides many of the answers. Television gives us history in dribs and drabs – what happened yesterday and what might happen tomorrow. The current affairs shows give us the sensationalized gleanings behind the nightly news, delving with short, quick thrusts into a scandal here and a human interest story there. Very little in the enormous deluge of what we see, hear and read helps us make sense of this flood of information. **The Champions** uses television as its raw material. The events and the footage are familiar, but the structure of the film helps us put the jigsaw pieces of history into a pattern which makes some sort of sense. It's like Grierson's often-quoted aphorism, "everything in this world is art, it's just a question of getting it into the right order."

Using a sensational selection of stock footage and interviews with the people who knew them, **The Champions** traces the parallel careers of Pierre Elliot Trudeau and René Lévesque. It has long been a fine debating point among historians whether it is men who shape history, or history that forms its own leaders. What would have happened to our world if Napoleon had been shipwrecked on his way to France, or Hitler had drowned in a vat of wallpaper glue? One is tempted by this film to ask what this country would be like without Trudeau and Lévesque. As the title suggests, they are the champions of their respective causes, "defenders on the final battleground – the fiercest and most noble warriors." The film shows the political evolution of these two men, an evolution which has led us step by inevitable step to the cheek-to-jowl standoff which Canadians now find themselves in. If we are getting a history lesson in this film, it is a history lesson personified. It is the stuff of great drama.

Donald Brittain is at the peak of his forces when he is making films about people. Film-biography is his medium and he can spin out masterpieces with both live and dead heroes. **Volcano,** about novelist Malcolm Lowry, **Never a Backward Step,** about newspaper magnate Lord Thomson, and **Bethune** number not only among his best films, but also among the best films ever produced at the National Film Board. Even in films like **Memorandum** about Nazi death camps, Brittain personifies abstract ideas into the breathing reality of the lives of individuals. Trudeau and Lévesque should have been a piece of cake for him. In a sense, they were. As with other Brittain films, we get all the gossip, and our heroes are deftly reduced to human proportions. We find that Lévesque regularly skipped classes at university to play poker with his pals Robert Cliche and Jean Marchand. We discover that Trudeau was careful to dress inappropriately; when a suit and tie were called for, he would show up in shorts and sandals. Basically, however, we really get to know these two only in terms of their political evolution. This is not a film about the private men and, in a way, it is too bad. Brittain seemed to have the material to give us some insight into the make-up of the champions but the glimpses are brief and, in terms of Brittain's other flesh and blood portraits, depressingly one-dimensional.

As pictures of two political animals, however, **The Champions** remains remarkably objective. We are

shown both leaders, complete with warts, and no one is likely to be swayed one way or the other. But Brittain is not neutral in the debate raging around him. He is afraid of the passions of nationalism and, like Trudeau is concerned with the idea that once it starts, nobody can say in what extremes it will end. His hard-hitting description of Duplessis sums up his attitudes: "Maurice Duplessis ran Québec as a piece of private property. At his peak, he controlled not only the police, but the newspapers, the universities, and the Church itself. He was a narrow, conservative, French Canadian nationalist, and to promote this, he stuffed ballot boxes and broke heads." Lévesque, albeit by democratic means, has been given the "awesome weapons of power." The statue of Duplessis is unveiled and sits in a place of honor in front of the legislature buildings. Quebecers now live under "majority rule with a vengeance."

Much of the fun of watching **The Champions** comes from its use of the old footage. A lot of it is loaded with irony. We see Lévesque in his early career as television commentator hosting the first trans-Canada television hook-up. He introduces "our" Queen Elizabeth who says that "the rising generation clearly shows that, French or English, we all belong to one great Canadian family." In a sequence which was on television in 1964, we see Trudeau, the lowly law professor, interviewing cabinet minister Lévesque on the disorder which his fledgling separatist ideas could create. "We live in a social and political context," said Trudeau, "where the forces of authority have traditionally behaved in a very authoritarian way." A different form of prophecy comes from a 1967 interview with newspaperman Claude Ryan. Lévesque had just committed what then seemed to be political suicide by trying to get the Liberal party to adopt a separatist platform. "He is dead now," said Ryan with a smile "but watch him in five to ten years from now."

With his deft scissors and wry narration, Brittain has made recent Canadian history into some sort of Tolstoyian soap opera. The characters who hold the fate of the country in their hands all seem to have grown up together, and their lives are intertwined. The politicians and their stars grow and wane but history irrevocably marches on, symbolized and actualized in the figures of these two leaders. "It is not really a battle between the emotional and the rational man. Both minds are brilliant, both souls are passionate and there is a fine rage in each. Both are glad that, at last, it has come to this time of confrontation. They are, in a sense, prisoners of each other. And this will be their final battle."

Ronald Blumer

Note. Part one of this film was shown on CBC television Sunday, Feb. 5th and part two on the following day. The film version of this film will be available from NFB offices in June of this year.

SHORT FILM REVIEWS

TAKE YOUR MARK

d: Michael Savoie, Peter Shatalow, **ph:** Michael Savoie, **additional ph:** Mark Irwin, Ray Burley, **ed:** Peter Shatalow, **ass't camera:** Greg Farrow, **m:** John Mills Cockell, **p:** Michael Savoie, Peter Shatalow, **p.c.:** Cedar Films Inc., 1977, **dist:** Cedar Films Inc., **Running time:** 25 minutes.

Take Your Mark is a documentary on Steven Pickell, a world-ranked Canadian swimmer who is a key part of Canada's swimming plans for the 1980 Olympics.

The film, produced and directed by Michael Savoie and Peter Shatalow, also highlights Deryk Snelling, a former British army physical-training instructor who coached Canada's national swim team at the Munich and Montreal Olympics.

The film's editing, by Shatalow, alternates a judicious selection of fast cuts in the action sequences with interviews which are strong enough in their content to enable the viewer to identify at once with Snelling as the mentor-coach and Pickell as the young athlete. In fact, one spends the rest of the film figuring out what makes each of them tick.

Snelling, whom sports writers have dubbed the Vince Lombardi of swim-

Steven Pickell and Deryk Snelling in training.

ming, produced Britain's top swim team in 1966 and came to Canada in 1967 to coach the Vancouver Dolphins, a swim club which has won the Canadian team title every year since he arrived. In 1976, after conflicts over recreational versus competitive swimming at the Dolphin's home pool, Snelling accepted a coaching position at the Etobicoke Olympium sports complex near Toronto, taking with him several top Dolphins including Steven Pickell.

In the film one observes the recurring features of body language – in particular the messianic fervor of Snelling's intense brown eyes – which exemplify the coach's emotional involvement in his current goal, which is to make the Etobicoke Olympians club the tops in Canada by 1978.

Snelling's approach to coaching is to push carefully selected athletes such as Pickell consistently to the point of physical and mental collapse, in a training program where practice is also broken down into its most essential elements. The outcome of the program will, in one way or another, be evident at the 1980 Olympics.

In Pickell, one observes a similar intense quality of non-verbal expression as he discusses his goals, but in him, one also senses a little more sense of humor and fun.

Among Pickell's sources of enjoyment are the enormous release and pleasure and well-being that occur at the other side of the intense pain of the workouts and time trials which make up Snelling's "break-down, build-up" training regimen. This is a form of training practiced in a variety of sports. "There's a reason I swim," says Pickell, "it's because of the feeling you get after you've swum eight miles, and been in the water two hours. Your whole body aches, every muscle's sore, your arms feel like lead, you can't lift them up again, your legs are like rubber, they can't do a thing. Your lungs can't hold any more air, they can't do a thing, and yet you take another stroke. That's the ultimate feeling in swimming."

There are also passages in the film which make **Take Your Mark** a companion piece to works of literature such as Eugen Herrigel's **Zen in the Art of Archery** and Michael Murphy's **Golf in the Kingdom** and **Jacob Atabet.** In these, sport becomes a metaphor for "things coming together" within a zen-like "right practice" which leads over time to remarkable powers of mind and body and levels of awareness which have connotations for personal growth that are ultimately unrelated to questions of winning or losing.

In one interview, for example, Pickell refers to the uncanny sharpening of perception which results from years of disciplined devotion to the same pursuit. "You can slow it down in your mind," he comments. "The more experienced you are, the more ability you have to slow down the action... and see it in minute detail, and see the complexities that you've got to have, the thousands of things that have got to come together to make that thing just flow. I think when you do, it just sort of opens you up to what we are potentially capable of doing."

Altogether, **Take Your Mark** is a thoroughly enjoyable film which is as appealing for followers of the Vince Lombardi "win or die" school of sports competition, as it is for proponents of "swimming for swimming's sake", where the ultimate aim is to be involved in play instead of in beating the world.

Jaan Pill

The kids from the Point: sometimes winners.

THE POINT

d: Robert Duncan, **sc:** Robert Duncan, **ph:** Andreas Poulsson, David DeVolpi, Savas Kalogeras, Douglas Kiefer, **ed:** Les Halman, **asst. ed:** Sidonie Kerr, **sd:** Claude Hazanavicius, Richard Nichol, Raymond Marcoux, Jean-Guy Normandin, **sd. ed.** Bernard Bordeleau, **m.d.:** Art Phillips, **ed.** Donald Douglas, **Musicians:** Gordon Lee, Harold Joyce, **exec. p.** Roman Kroitor, **p:** William Weintraub, **p.c.** National Film Board, **col:** 16mm, **narr:** Budd Knapp, **running time:** 50 minutes, year: 1978.

"We don't care for all the rest of Canada,
All the rest of Canada,
All the rest of Canada,
We don't care for all the rest of Canada,
We're from Point St. Charles."

The Point is a film about the Irish. It is a film which might be called racist but, paradoxically, a film which will be loved and applauded by those who star in it: the poor Irish of the dying industrial underbelly of Montreal – Point St. Charles.

The Point is also a film which has caused an enormous amount of con-

troversy, even before its release. In the minds of both those who love it and hate it, it has become far more than just a film about a particular area of a particular city. It is a travelogue presenting us with an overview of a state of mind, the chronic, hereditary disease known as poverty. In an odd way, this is a courageous film because it does not present a fashionably left of center "running-Capitalist-dogs" view of poverty. Also, it is not an upreaching fiction, skilfully fashioned to forge the masses into organized revolt. If anything, **The Point** is a film of "constatation" and the poverty in it is ugly, brutal, corrosive and ultimately enfeebling.

It would be wrong, however, to represent this lively film as a modern day, Dickens-like portrait of bleakness. The hour is exciting, full of energy and, in its own way, more emotionally and sociologically true than many a more "worthy" film on the same subject. The Point and its people are themselves exciting, and the characters presented on the screen are as alive and fighting as the Point St. Charles working class heroes of David Fennario's plays. For example, it is the first film which I have seen that overtly faces the fact of racial tension between the French and English of Montreal. To anyone growing up in the rougher parts of Montreal, the two solitudes are often bridged with rocks and fists. As the film wryly puts it... "In Canada it is widely believed that all the French in Quebec are poor and all the English are rich. They have heard that story in Point St. Charles, but they have trouble believing it." Nowadays, The Point is no longer 100 percent Irish working poor. Not only are the poor of the area no longer exclusively Irish, they are no longer working. Jobs have moved away from this formerly industrial area, replaced by street crime, charred buildings and monthly welfare checks. The cycle of poverty continues and the children learn the ropes quickly.

The Point is not the first voyage that the National Film Board has taken across the tracks. **Things I Cannot Change**, a stinging *cinéma vérité* portrait of a poor family from the same area is the film that inspired the NFB's Challenge for Change program. That film presented a family of nine children headed by a weakling father in such a devastating light that the family was forced to move out of the area. **Calabogie Fiddler** by Peter Pearson is among the best dramatic films produced by the National Film Board. Set in the rural Ottawa Valley, this film also reinforces our stereotyped image of the drinking, brawling Irish. As with **Things I Cannot Change**, this powerful, energetic – and in many ways too honest – film was very poorly received in the region which it portrayed. Challenge for Change's response to these films was to make films not just about, but for, disadvantaged groups. A film such as **VTR St. Jacques** illustrates a group organizing its way out of economic repression. These films are not portraits, nor do they pretend to be typical of what is going on. Their aim and purpose are not filmic but inspirational.

The Point brings us down from these lofty heights. It gives this area, not to the local social activists fighting for lower rents, but to the nightly arsonists and to the mailmen with their six-million dollars in welfare checks. The film is particularly telling in its view of the kids, the kids "without any dreams" who do not worry about the diminishing job market because, "we're all strong workers down here, ya know." As a former resident who has succeeded in moving out of the area puts it, "they have struck out down here. I see people suffering with alcohol and sickness. I'm not proud of that, but they have a lot of guts to put up with it." And it is this spirit which comes through in the film, the spirit of a neighbourhood which is now almost no more, the spirit of the ancestors who arrived half-starved on the ships a hundred years ago, and finally, the spunk of the young people still ready for a fight, whatever the odds. The film does not leave us with feelings of despair or helplessness, but with a very unromantic view of poverty. The slums are not pretty, the people want out, and the lucky ones make it.

Ronald Blumer

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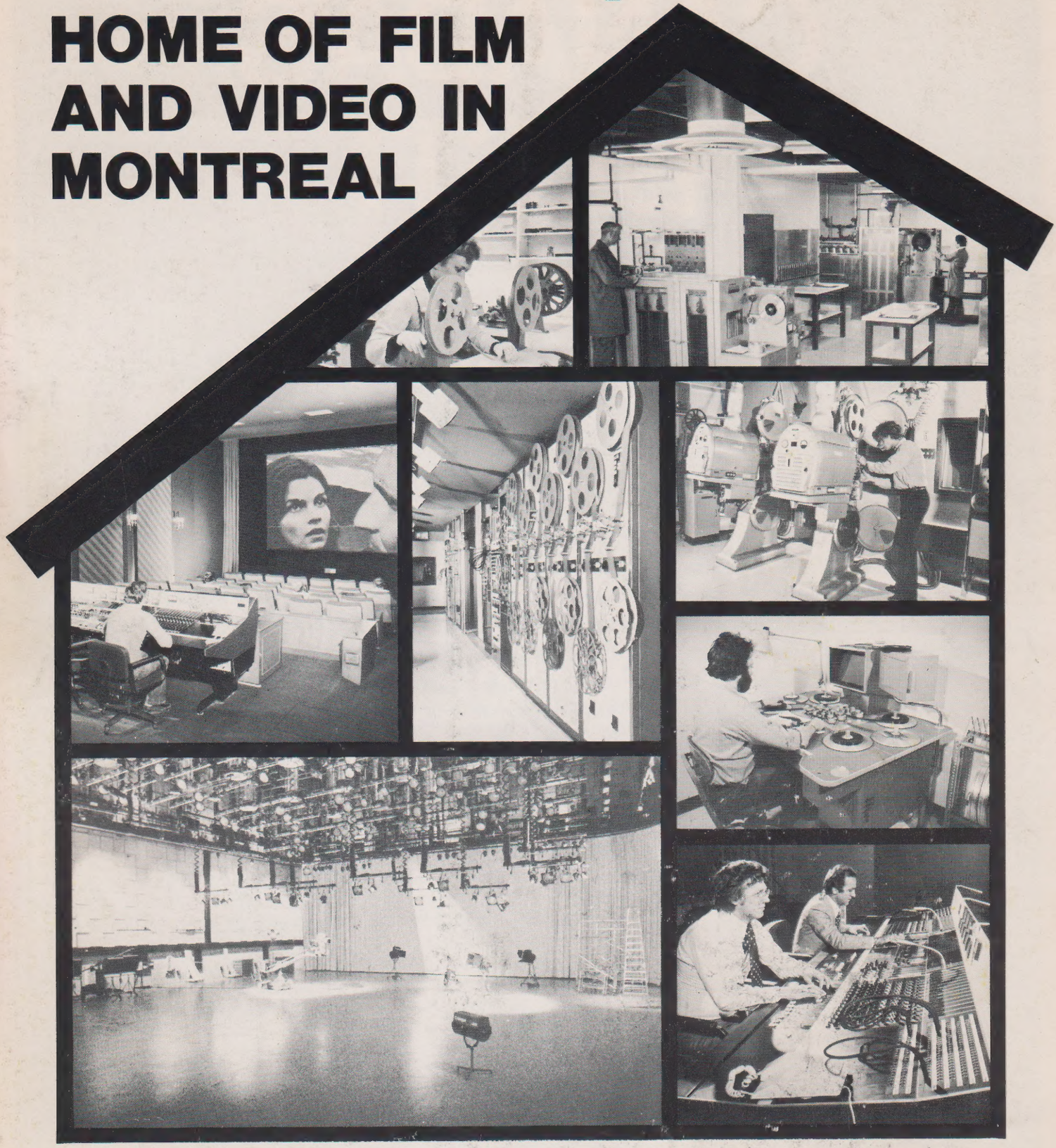

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